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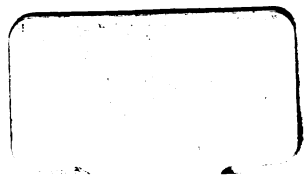
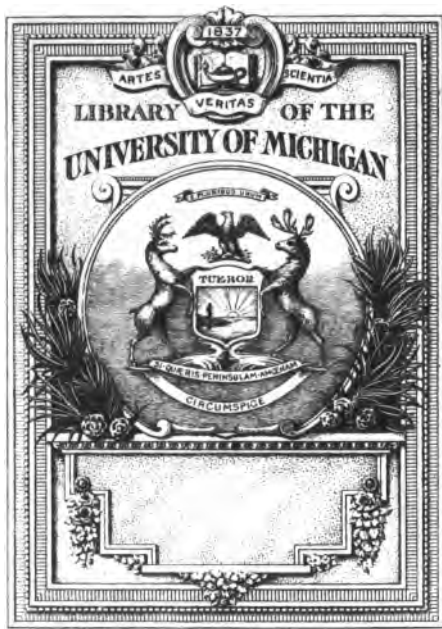
# Knights of the Cross

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by  
Henryk Sienkiewicz  
Author of  
Quo Vadis

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# THE KNIGHTS OF THE CROSS

OR

## KRZYŻACY

**Historical Romance**

BY

HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ

AUTHOR OF "QUO VADIS," "THE DELUGE," "WITH FIRE AND SWORD,"  
"PAN MICHAEL," ETC., ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL POLISH BY

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VOLUME III

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## CHAPTER I.

THEY finally arrived with the remains of Danusia in the forests of Spychow, whose borders were continually guarded by Jurand's men. One of them hastened with the news to old Tolima and to Father Kaleb, others led the procession, at first through a tortuous and sunken path, then upon the broad forest highway as far as the confines of the town where the forest terminated, and where were extensive bogs and quagmires, swarming with birds of the swamp beyond which, upon a dry elevation, the little town of Spychow was situated. The ringing of the church bells which reached their ears immediately upon emerging from the forest told them the sad news had already reached the town. After a while they observed at a distance a number of men and women, advancing toward them. When that crowd had approached to within a distance of two or three bow shots the persons could be distinguished. In front walked Jurand supported by Tolima; he was feeling his way with his staff. It was easy to recognize him because of his immense size, the red hollows of his eyes, and his long white hair falling upon his shoulders. By his side walked Father Kaleb, attired in white surplice, carrying a cross. Behind them they carried Jurand's banner, upon which was his coat-of-arms, which was guarded by Spychow's armed men. Behind them were the married women with kerchiefs around their heads, and the young women without head-gear. The crowd was followed by a wagon intended for the remains.

When Zbyszko saw Jurand, he ordered the bearers to lower the litter, which up to that moment he had carried himself, at the head, to the ground. Then he approached him and began to exclaim in a terrible voice :

“ I searched for her until I found her, and I rescued her, but she chose to go to God rather than to Spychow ! ” But pain completely broke him down : he fell upon Jurand’s breast, embraced his neck and moaned :

“ O Jesus, Jesus ! O Jesus ! . . . ”

This sight moved the armed retainers of Spychow, and they began to strike their arrows on the shields. They had no other means by which they could demonstrate their desire for vengeance. One after another, the women applied their aprons to their eyes, or covered their heads entirely, exclaiming in pious, woeful voices : “ Oh, evil destiny. Woe ! Woe ! Joy to you, but to us mourning. Death reduced you to a skeleton. Woe to us ! Woe ! ”

Some of them threw back their heads, closing their eyes and exclaiming : “ Were you dissatisfied with us, little flower ? You leave us here in great mourning whilst you go to heavenly rest. Woe to us ! Woe ! ” Finally some of them prayed to her to have mercy upon the tears of her father and husband. That lamentation was half song and half dirge, because simple people could not express their sorrow otherwise.

However, Jurand freeing himself from Zbyszko’s embrace stretched his staff in front of him as a sign that he desired to go to Danusia. Then Tolima and Zbyszko grasped him under his arms and brought him to the litter. He kneeled in front of

the body, moved his hand to her brow, then to her crossed hands, nodded his head several times as though he wished to acknowledge that it was the body of his own Danusia and none else, that it was the body of his own child. Then he embraced her with one arm, and the other, lacking the hand, he lifted up. But those present also understood it to mean that even this arm had no complaint to make before God, which was more eloquent than all expressions of sorrow. Zbyszko, who was, owing to the momentary outburst of sorrow, almost stupefied, silently knelt at the other side looking like a statue of stone. Perfect silence reigned so that the chirping of the grasshoppers in the field and the buzzing of flies could be heard.

Finally, Father Kaleb sprinkled Danusia's, Zbyszko's and Jurand's faces with the holy water, and began to chant the "*Requiem æternum.*" Then he prayed aloud in tones as of a prophetic voice; he prayed that the martyrdom of that innocent child might be the last drop to fill the cup of unrighteous deeds, that the day of judgment might be at hand with punishment and calamity.

Then they proceeded toward Spychow, not placing the body upon the wagon but carrying it in front of the procession upon the adorned litter. The bells continued to ring and seemed to summon them to the chapel, and they proceeded chanting upon the broad meadow, in the golden sunset as though the defunct was leading them indeed to eternal light and radiance.

It was already eventide and the herds were already returning from the field when they arrived. The chapel wherein they placed the remains was illuminated by torches and virgin wax candles.

At the command of Father Kaleb, seven young ladies, upon their knees, pronounced the Litany by the body, until daylight. Zbyszko also did not leave the corpse, and in the morning he placed her himself in the coffin which expert carpenters had prepared during the night out of an oak trunk, framing in the lid above the head a golden amber pane.

Jurand was not present then, because something extraordinary had happened to him. As soon as he returned home his legs became paralyzed, and when they put him to bed he became motionless and unconscious. Father Kaleb's endeavors to make him reply to his questions were in vain; he neither heard nor understood, but lay upon his back with his eyebrows turned toward heaven, and his face radiant and happy. At times his lips moved as though conversing with somebody. The priest and Tolima understood that he was conversing with his defunct daughter, and that his smiles were to her. They also thought that he was already in the last agony, and that he saw everlasting bliss with his soul's eyes; but in that regard they were mistaken, for he continued in the same state for a whole week, and when Zbyszko finally left with his ransom for Macko, Jurand was still alive.

## CHAPTER II.

AFTER Danusia's death Zbyszko did not take to bed, but he was as one benumbed. In the first few days it was not so bad with him. He went about, conversed about his dead love, he visited Jurand and sat at his bedside, and replied to the priest's enquiries concerning Macko's captivity, and both thought it advisable to send Tolima to Prussia and Malborg to ascertain where Macko was, and to pay the ransom for him and Zbyszko in as many *grzywnien* as was agreed upon with Arnold von Baden and his brother. There was enough treasure in the cellars of Spychow, which Jurand had saved up or conquered, to pay the ransom. The priest admitted that if the Knights of the Cross should accept the ransom, they would also let the old knight free without any difficulty, and they would not insist upon Zbyszko's presence.

"Go to Plock," said the priest to Tolima, who was ready to go, "and get an escort from the prince, otherwise you will be taken by the first *comthur* who will skin you and even hang you."

"Bah! Surely I know them," replied old Tolima, "they are even capable of skinning those who travel with an escort."

Then he left; by and by the priest regretted that Zbyszko himself had not gone. But it is true, he feared to dispatch Zbyszko for fear lest in his first moments of sorrow he would not be able to conduct the affair properly, or in a fit of anger against the Knights of the Cross he might jeopardize his safety. He also knew that it would be hard for



him to leave the coffin containing the remains of his beloved, in fresh mourning and bereavement, immediately after such a terrible and painfully long journey, as that between Gotteswerder and Spychow. When he had calculated all this he pitied him, because Zbyszko's condition gradually became worse. He had lived until Danusia's death under a terrible strain, and tension of his utmost strength. He had traveled through many lands, fought duels and rescued his lady, making his way through wild forests. All that had terminated suddenly as though somebody had cut it asunder with the sword, and nothing remained but the recollection that all those endeavors had been in vain, that all was over and with it had departed a part of his life; hope, and weal had also departed. The beloved one had perished and nothing was left. Everybody has something for to-morrow. Every one has something in view and plans for the future. But not so Zbyszko, the future was indifferent to him. His thoughts concerning the future were analogous to those of Jagienka upon leaving Spychow, when she had said: "My happiness is behind me, not in front of me." Those feelings of sorrow were in comparison immeasurable to Jagienka's. The emptiness and distress gradually augmented his sorrow for Danusia. Grief seized him, overpowered him and shrunk his heart in such manner that finally there was no space left for anything else. Thus his thoughts were only of that sorrow; he nurtured them within himself. He felt for nothing else; shut himself up, and plunged in a sort of half sleep as if not knowing what was going on around him. All the faculties of his body and soul, his wonted quickness and activity

were in a relaxed condition. In his looks and motions he had the appearance of an old man. Whole days and nights he passed, either at the coffin of Danusia, in the crypt, or basking in the midday sun upon the terrace. At times he was so much absorbed in thought, that he gave no answer to questions. Father Kaleb, who loved him, was alarmed; he feared Zbyszko might be consumed as iron is consumed by rust; he sadly thought that it would have been advisable to have sent Zbyszko to the Knights of the Cross with the ransom. "It is necessary," he said, to the sexton of the village (for there was no other present to whom he could relate his troubles) "that something disagreeable should happen to him, otherwise he will be exhausted." And the sexton confirmed it discreetly, saying by comparison, that if one swallow a bone and is choking, the best thing is to strike him on the neck.

Yet no accident had occurred; instead of that, a few weeks later de Lorche arrived unexpectedly. Zbyszko trembled at the sight of him because it reminded him of the expedition in Zmudz and the rescue of Danusia. As for de Lorche, he did not in the least attempt to abate those painful reminiscences. Indeed, he made himself acquainted with Zbyszko's misfortunes, he went down at once with Zbyszko to pray at the coffin of Danusia: he also incessantly spoke of her, consequently as he was himself a minstrel, he composed a song concerning her, which he sang at night, accompanied by a lute, at the grating of the vault, so stirring and sad, that Zbyszko, though he did not understand the words, wept bitterly at the very notes. This lasted till the dawn.

Then, exhausted by weeping, sighing and want of rest, he fell into deep sleep, but when he awoke, it could be seen that his tears had swept sorrow along with them, for he was livelier than before. He was also glad of de Lorche's presence and thanked him for it. Then he enquired how he got the information of his misfortune.

De Lorche informed him through Father Kaleb, that the first time he heard of Danusia's death was from old Tolima, whom he had met in the prisons of the *comthur* at Lubowa. Apart from that he was journeying toward Spychow to deliver himself up as a prisoner to Zbyszko.

The news of the imprisonment of Tolima greatly impressed Zbyszko and the priest, because there was not a more difficult task in the world than to pluck from the throat of the Knights of the Cross money once grasped. In the face of that it was necessary to proceed there with another ransom.

"Very bad!" exclaimed Zbyszko. "My poor uncle is waiting there, thinking that I have forgotten him. I must now hurry with all speed to see him."

Then he turned toward de Lorche and said:

"You know how it happened? Are you aware that he is in the hands of the Knights of the Cross?"

"I know," answered de Lorche, "for I have seen him at Malborg, and that is the reason why I came here."

Meanwhile Father Kaleb began to complain.

"We did not move well," he said, "everybody lost his head. I am surprised at Tolima's blunder. Why did he not go to Plock, and procure an escort? Without any guide he fell into the hands of those murderers!"

De Lorche had nothing to say, he only shrugged his shoulders.

"An escort is nothing to them there. The prince of Plock suffers from them just as one of you here. There are continuous fights and incursions at the frontier. Every *comthur*, bah, every bailiff does what he wishes, and as to robbery, they outstrip one another."

"Nevertheless, Tolima ought to have gone first to Plock."

"He wanted to go, but he was kidnapped on the road near the frontier. If he had not told them that he carried money for the *comthur* of Lubowa they would have surely killed him. That was the only thing that saved him. Now the *comthur* produces witnesses to prove that Tolima himself said it."

"How is my Uncle Macko? Is he well? Is he not there in danger of his life?" asked Zbyszko.

"He is quite well," replied de Lorche. "There is much ill-feeling against King Witold and against those who assisted the Zmudzians, and the old knight would have surely been murdered if it were not for the ransom which they covet. The brothers von Baden protect him also for the same reason. Moreover, I myself am concerned in it. If any harm befalls me the knights of Flanders, Gueldres and Burgundy would rise against them . . . especially as I am related to the count of Gueldres."

"Why do you say that your head is in danger?" interrupted Zbyszko.

"Because I am your captive. I told them at Malborg thus: 'If you kill the old knight of Bogdaniec, then the young knight will kill me.'"

"I will not take your life, so help me God!"

“ I know that you will not, but they don't know it, and are afraid of it; for that reason Macko is safe among them. They told me that you also were a captive, that they let you go on parole and that exempts you from presenting yourself. I replied to them that when you had taken me captive you were then a free man. Here I am at your disposal; and as long as I am in your hands, they cannot harm you nor Macko. You pay the ransom to von Baden, but ask two or threefold ransom for me. They must pay it. I don't say this to insinuate that I am worth more than you are. No, I want to punish them for their covetousness, which I condemn. I have never understood them thoroughly, but now they and their hospitality disgust me. I shall go to the Holy Land, to look there for adventures. I can no more serve them.”

“ Or remain with us, sir,” said Father Kaleb, “ and I think that it will be so; even if they send the ransom we will not give you up.”

“ If they don't pay, then I shall pay it myself. I came here with a considerable train and laden wagons; their contents will suffice.”

Father Kaleb repeated to Zbyszko what de Lorche said, which was of importance to Macko, but, as far as Zbyszko was concerned, he being young and caring little for wealth, replied :

“ Upon my honor! It shall not be as you said. You have been to me as a brother and friend, and I will take from you no ransom whatsoever.”

Then they embraced each other; they felt that a new bond of friendship bound them together. But de Lorche smiled and said :

“ Well, keep this from the Germans, or it will be injurious to Macko. They are afraid and they

must ransom me, or it will be published in the courts and among the knights that they invite knights as guests, but if one of them is captured they forget him. But the Order is very anxious just now to have guests, because they are afraid of Witold, and they fear the Poles and their king even more."

"Then let it be as you say," said Zbyszko. "You remain here or wherever you wish in Mazowsze, but I shall proceed to Malborg for my uncle, and I shall there insist upon my rights against you."

"In the name of St. Jerzy! Do as you said," replied de Lorche. "But listen first to what I tell you: They say at Malborg that the king of Poland is going to Plock or some other place near the frontier to meet there the master of the Order. The Knights of the Cross greatly desire it, because they want to be informed whether the king means to help Witold, or whether he will openly declare war against them in Zmudz. Ha! They are as subtle as serpents, but in Witold they have found their master. The Order is also afraid of him, because it is never known what he means to do. 'Give us back Zmudz,' they say in the chapter. But against that request he has, as it were, a sword hanging above our necks: 'Say one word, and rebellion is ready!' This is actually so. They will be obliged to come to his court, maybe they will agree to fight there in the lists. Besides this I was informed that the ladies there are of angelic beauty."

"Did you say, sir, that the king intends to go to Plock," interrupted Father Kaleb.

"Yes! Let Zbyszko join the royal court. The

master wishes to win the favor of the king for himself, and you are well aware that when in need there is none more humble than the Knights of the Cross. Let Zbyszko join the suite and watch his own interests. Let him raise his voice the loudest against their wrongdoings. Otherwise they will listen to the grand master in the presence of the king and the Krakowian knights, who are the most famous in the world, and whose decrees spread far and wide among the knighthood."

"It is excellent advice. By the Cross! Excellent!" exclaimed Father Kaleb.

"It is!" affirmed de Lorche, "there will be no lack of means. I heard at Malborg that there will be feasts, and tournaments because the foreign guests insist upon challenging the Polish knights in the lists. By God! John of Aragon is also expected there; he is the most valiant knight in Christendom. Do you not know it? He is apt to send the gauntlet from Aragon and challenge your Zawisza, so that it might not be said that there is another knight his equal."

The arrival of de Lorche, his appearance and his speech, awakened Zbyszko from his painful numbness, so that he listened with interest to the news. He had heard of John of Aragon. It was the duty of every knight to know and remember all the names of the most famous warriors; also the nobility of Aragon, and specially the fame of John, had spread over the whole world. No knight ever equaled him in the lists. The Moors fled at the very sight of his armor. It was the opinion of all that he was the chief knight in the whole of Christendom.

Upon hearing the news, Zbyszko's warlike

knightly soul awoke within him, and he eagerly questioned de Lorche :

“ Has he challenged Czarny (black) Zawisza ? ”

“ About a year ago John sent his gauntlet and Zawisza sent back his own.”

“ Then John of Aragon will surely come.”

“ I am not sure, but there are rumors to that effect. The Knights of the Cross invited him long ago.”

“ I wish to God that I could see such a thing ! ”

“ God grant ! ” said de Lorche. “ Even should Zawisza be overpowered, which might easily happen, it would be a great glory for him, bah, and for your whole nation, that he was challenged by John of Aragon.”

“ We shall see ! ” said Zbyszko. “ I only wish that the fight might come to pass.”

“ I also wish it.”

Nevertheless their wishes were not to be fulfilled then, since the old chroniclers remind us that the encounter of Zawisza with the famous John of Aragon did not take place till a dozen years afterward, at Perpignan, where, in the presence of the Emperor Zigmund, Pope Benedict XIII., the king of Aragon and numerous princes and cardinals, Zawisza Czarny, of Garbow, by the first thrust with his spear, threw John of Aragon from his horse and was victorious. Nevertheless, Zbyszko and de Lorche rejoiced meanwhile ; they thought that even should John of Aragon be unable to present himself at the appointed time, it was already an eminent act of knighthood, for there was no lack of fighters in Poland, and few of them would retreat from Zawisza ; and among the guests



of the Knights of the Cross, one could always find the foremost tilters from France, England, Burgundy and Italy, always ready to engage everybody.

"Listen," said Zbyszko to de Lorche, "I feel bad without my uncle and I must ransom him. I shall therefore start for Plock early to-morrow morning. But why should you remain here? You are not here in captivity, so come with me and you will see the king and his court."

"I was just ready to ask you for it," replied de Lorche. "My wish to see your knights is not of recent date, and I have also been informed that the ladies at the court have more the appearance of angels than terrestrial inhabitants."

"You have already said that of Witold's court," observed Zbyszko.

### CHAPTER III.

ZBYSZKO, who was always accustomed to execute all his undertakings promptly, was determined now to act in his uncle's behalf. The following morning, he and de Lorche started for Plock. The road along the frontier, owing to numerous bands of robbers, was always, even in time of perfect peace, unsafe. Those bands were protected and supported by the Knights of the Cross, to whom King Jagiello spoke in severe terms about it. In spite of complaints which were supported in Rome, in spite of the threatenings and severe measures of justice, the neighboring *comthurs* often permitted their paid soldiers to join the robbers, and actually protected those who fell into the hands of the Poles, while sheltering those robbers who returned with booty and captives, not only in the villages belonging to the Order, but also in the castles.

It was just in such murderous hands that many a traveler and inhabitant beyond the frontier were found. Especially children of wealthy parents were kidnapped for ransom. But two young knights with a considerable train composed, besides the hostlers, of about a dozen armed men on foot and horseback, feared no attack. They therefore reached Plock without an accident. There, about one mile distant from the city, they met with the unexpected.

There in the inn they met Tolima, who had arrived one day before them. It had happened thus: when the *starosta* of the Knights of the Cross

at Lubowa heard that the deputy had succeeded in hiding part of the ransom at the time when it had been taken from Tolima near Brodnice, he sent him back to that castle with an order to the *comthur* to force him to show the spot where he had hid the money. Tolima profited by this chance, and escaped. When the knights wondered at his easy escape, he explained to them as follows :

“It is all on account of their avarice. The *comthur* of Brodnice refused to give me a sufficient guard, as he wished to keep from the public that money was in question. It may be they would have arranged with the Lubowa *starosta* to divide it among themselves, but they feared if it became known, it would then be necessary to send a considerable portion of it to Malborg, or to give up the whole to the knights from Baden. He only gave me two as an escort, one soldier who was obliged to row with me across the Drwiec, and a certain clerk. Their object was, not to be observed by anybody and, as you know that the frontier was quite near, and as they gave me an oaken oar. . . . Well—and with God’s favor . . . I find myself here in Plock.”

“I know! The others never returned,” exclaimed Zbyszko.

The stern face of Tolima brightened up at Zbyszko’s remark.

“And as the Drwiec falls into the Vistula, how was it possible for them to return by water? Perhaps the people of the Order will find them at Torun!”

After a while he turned toward Zbyszko and added :

"The *comthur* of Lubowa seized from me a part of the money. But the portion which he hid during the attack I have recovered, and that, sir, I have delivered to your armor-bearer for safety. He lives in the castle. It is more secure with him than with me in the inn."

"Then my armor-bearer is here in Plock? What is he doing here?" asked Zbyszko, not a little surprised.

"He came here with that lady who was at Spychow, after Zygfried committed suicide. Now she is a court lady at the palace here. He told me so yesterday."

But Zbyszko who was a little stunned with sorrow for Danusia had made no inquiries whilst at Spychow and knew nothing; but now he remembered that the Bohemian was dispatched ahead with Zygfried. Whilst thinking about it, his heart was filled with pain and revenge.

"True," he said; "but where is that executioner who remained with him?"

"Did not Father Kaleb tell you that Zygfried hanged himself? You, sir, passed by his grave."

Silence reigned for a moment.

"The armor-bearer said," continued Tolima, "that he was going to you, and that he would have already done it, were it not for the young lady who became sick after her arrival from Spychow, whom he was obliged to take care of."

Zbyszko shuddered with grief, and inquired again, like one awaking from sleep,

"What lady?"

"That same lady," replied the old man. "Your sister, or relative, who arrived here with Knight Macko, disguised as a boy; they found our master

whilst he was groping for the road. If it were not for her, neither Macko nor your armor-bearer would have recognized him. Our lord loved her much after that; our lord esteemed her as his own daughter; besides Father Kaleb, only herself could understand him."

Then the young knight opened his eyes wide with astonishment.

"Father Kaleb did not tell me of any lady, and I have no lady relatives."

"He told you nothing because you were plunged in grief and cared nothing for God's world."

"And what was the name of that lady?"

"They called her Jagienka."

It appeared to Zbyszko like a dream. He could not believe that Jagienka from far Zgorzelice could have traveled to Spychow. That did not enter his head; why and wherefore did she come? He was aware that the young lady was fond of him at Zgorzelice, but he then acquainted her with the fact that he was married. In face of this, he could not make himself believe that Macko had taken her to Spychow with the object in view of giving her to him. Moreover neither Macko, nor the Bohemian, ever reminded him of her. All that appeared to him very strange and totally incomprehensible. He therefore again overwhelmed Tolima with questions to repeat to him the incredible news like a man who does not believe, neither wants to believe his own ears.

But Tolima, however, could give him no information on the subject, but instead went to the castle without delay to search for the armor-bearer, and soon returned with him before sunset. The Bohemian joyfully saluted his young master, but at

the same time he was sad, because he knew of all the happenings at Spychow. Zbyszko also was glad, in his soul, feeling that a faithful and friendly heart such as the Bohemian possessed was just the one which a man in trouble stood in need of. He shed tender tears, whilst relating to him the death of Danusia. He poured out his heart to the Bohemian as one brother would to another. This lasted a long while. When Zbyszko finished his sad story he requested de Lorche to recite that sad song which he had composed for the dead. He sang accompanied by a cithara at the open window, with his eyes lifted to the stars.

This finally relieved him considerably and they began to speak of their affairs which were waiting for them at Plock.

“I am here on my way to Malborg; you must know that my uncle is in captivity and I go to ransom him.”

“I know,” replied the Bohemian, “you are doing well, sir. I wanted to go to Spychow myself to advise you to proceed to Plock. The king is going to negotiate with the grand master at Raciazk. It must be borne in mind that in the presence of his majesty the Knights of the Cross will not appear haughty and they will feign Christian uprightness.”

“But Tolima told me that you wanted to go to me, but Jagienka’s health detained you. I also heard that Uncle Macko brought her with him and that she also went to Spychow? I was greatly surprised at it. But tell me, for what reason had Uncle Macko taken her along with him?”

“There were many reasons. Your uncle did not want to leave her unprotected at Zgorzelice,

for he feared that Wilk and Cztań might invade Zgorzelice and wrong the young lady. Without her all is safe there. Because in Poland, as you are aware, if nobles cannot get a maiden by fair means, they take her by force, but nobody dares to lift up his hand against little orphans, because such crimes are punished by the executioner's sword, and, what is worse than the sword, infamy. However there was another reason of the same character. The abbot died and left his estate to the young lady. The estate was under the guardianship of the bishop here. For that reason did Macko bring the young lady to Plock."

"But he had taken her also to Spychow?"

"He had taken her there when the bishop and the court left Plock, and had no other place where he could leave her. It was fortunate that he did take her. Otherwise we should have missed the old Knight Jurand and passed him by as one passes a strange old beggar. When she began to pity him, it was then we discovered who the old beggar was. The Lord directed all that through her compassionate heart."

Then he related how Jurand subsequently could not be without her; how he loved and blessed her, and although Zbyszko had already heard it from Tolima he listened with emotion and thankfulness for Jagienka.

"May God give her health!" he finally said. "I only wonder why you have said nothing to me about her."

The Bohemian was somewhat perplexed, and wishing to gain time for reflection for reply, he asked:

"Where, sir?"

"There, in Zmudz, when we were with Skirwoillo."

"Did we not speak about it? As I live, it seems to me that we did, but something else occupied your mind then."

"You spoke of Jurand's return, but you said nothing of Jagienka."

"Ay, has it not slipped from your mind? Besides, God knows! It may be that Knight Macko thought that I had told you and I thought he had. Whatever we told you then, sir, was in vain, and I do not wonder. But it is otherwise now. Luckily the young lady is also here, for she can assist Knight Macko."

"What can be obtained?"

"The princess of this place is very fond of her. Let her speak to the princess. The Knights of the Cross will not refuse to grant her request, for two reasons: first she is of royal birth; secondly, she is a great friend of the Order. Now, listen, Prince Skirgello, who is the king's brother, rebelled against Prince Witold and fled to the Knights of the Cross, who want to assist him and place him upon Witold's throne, and as the princess possesses the king's ear, the Knights of the Cross wish her to influence the king in favor of Skirgello and against Witold. They understand, may they go to perdition, that if they succeeded in causing Witold's downfall, they would secure peace for themselves. They therefore, from morning till evening, prostrate themselves at the princess' feet and guess all her wishes."

"Jagienka loves Uncle Macko," said Zbyszko, "and I am sure she will plead for him."

"I am sure, it cannot be otherwise. But let us



go now to the castle, sirs, and advise her how and what to say."

"De Lorche and myself intended to visit the castle in any case," replied Zbyszko, "and for that reason I came here; we want only to arrange our hair and respectably dress ourselves." After a while he added: "For my mourning I wanted to have my hair cut, but I forgot to do it."

"It is better so," replied the Bohemian. He left and called the servants and came back with them, whilst the two young knights made themselves ready for the evening banquet at the castle. He informed them of the proceedings in the king's and princess' courts.

"The Knights of the Cross," he said, "endeavor to undermine Prince Witold, for as long as he lives and rules over Zmudz, protected by the king's power, so long will he refuse to give them rest. Indeed, he is the only one whom they fear. Hey! They burrow under him, they burrow like moles. They have already incited against him the princess here; they will probably now succeed also in inciting Prince Janusz against him; the cause of it is Wizny."

"Are Prince Janusz and Princess Anna also here? We shall meet with many people whom we know."

"Of course, both are here," replied the Bohemian, "they have quite many affairs against the Knights of the Cross, and intend to complain to the master of the Order, in the presence of the king, about the many outrages of the Knights of the Cross."

"On whose side is the king? Maybe he is in their favor, and will not draw his sword against them."

"The king does not love the Knights of the

Cross. It is said that he threatened them with war some time ago. . . . As to Prince Witold, the king prefers him to his own brother, Skirgello, who is wild and a drunkard. . . . Therefore the knights who surround the king say that his majesty will do nothing against Witold, and will not promise the Knights of the Cross not to go against them. That is most likely the case, because Princess Alexandra often visits the king, and she appears to be worried."

"Is Zawisza Czarny also here?"

"He is not here; but one cannot see all who are here. But should something occur, Hey! Mighty God; we will make the splinters fly!"

"Neither will I spare them." After a few Paters they were nicely attired, and proceeded to the castle. The evening banquet had to take place that day not in the princely palace, but at the house of Andrzej of Jasienc, the *starosta* of the city, whose mansion was situated near the confines of the castle walls at the Greater Bastion. Owing to the very hot evening and to avoid closeness and discomfort to the guests the *starosta* ordered tables to be placed in the courtyard where service-trees and yews grew among marble slabs. It was illuminated by burning tar barrels, the flames of which shed a bright, yellow light, but brighter still the moon from an unclouded sky in the midst of countless stars appeared like a silver knightly shield. The crowned guests as well as the princes had not yet arrived. Zbyszko knew quite a number of them, especially those of Prince Janusz's court, above all his old Krakow acquaintances; he espied Krzon from Kozięglowy, Lis of Targowisko, Marcin of Wrocimowice, Domarat of Kobylany,

Staszko of Charbimowice and finally Powala of Taczew. The sight of the latter especially gladdened Zbyszko's heart, because he remembered the particular favors which that famous knight had rendered him, in times past, at Krakow. He was unable to approach any of them, because the local knights surrounded every one closely, asking information about Krakow, the court pastimes, and the various phases of the war, at the same time inspecting their brilliant attire, the curls of their wonderfully powdered hair which made them appear older than they really were, taking from them all patterns of court and fashion.

But Powala of Taczew recognized Zbyszko; he pushed through the Mazurs and approached him.

"I know you, young man," he said, squeezing his hand. "How are you and whence do you come? By God! I see that you are already a belted and spurred knight. Many wait for that until old age, but you seem to serve St. Jerzy deservedly."

"God speed you, noble lord," replied Zbyszko. "I was not as happy when I threw down the foremost German from his horse as I am now, seeing you look well."

"I am also glad to see you. Where is your parent?"

"He is not my father, but my uncle. The Knights of the Cross captured him and I am going to ransom him."

"And that little young lady who covered you with a veil?"

Zbyszko did not reply; he only lifted up his eyes which were soon suffused with tears toward heaven. When the Lord of Taczew observed it, he said:

"This is the valley of tears . . . nothing but a

valley, but come let us sit down upon the bench under the service-tree and tell me your woeful adventure."

Then he led him to the corner of the courtyard where they sat down and Zbyszko related to him Jurand's misfortunes, the kidnapping of Danusia, his adventures when searching for her, and finally how he had rescued her and her death. Powala listened attentively. His alternate emotions, of astonishment, anger, threatening and pity were reflected in his visage. Finally when Zbyszko had finished, he said :

"I shall tell all that to the king, our lord. Besides that, he has to bring before the master the affair of Jasiak of Kretkowa, and demand severe punishment for those who kidnapped him. They have taken him because he is wealthy and they demand a ransom. It is a trifling affair in their eyes to lift up their hands even against a child."

He reflected a little and then continued : "That brood is insatiable, worse than the Turks and Tartars. In their hearts they fear us and the king, yet they cannot restrain themselves from rapacity and murder. They attack villages, slaughter the peasants, drown the fishermen and snatch little children, like wolves. What would it be if they were not afraid? The grand master clandestinely sends letters against the king to foreign courts ; yet he cringes in the king's presence, because he knows our strength better than others. But their measure is filled at last."

He was silent for a moment, then he put his hand upon Zbyszko's shoulder.

"I shall tell the king," he repeated. "His blood has been boiling like water in a pot. I assure you,

that the authors of your wrongs shall not escape terrible punishment."

"None of those are alive now," replied Zbyszko.

Then Powala looked at him benignantly.

"God bless you! It seems that you have made them no presents. There is still one, Lichtenstein, whom you have not yet paid. We have also vowed against him in Krakow, but to execute our vow it will probably be necessary to wait for a war, which God grant, because he cannot accept our challenge without the grand master's permission. But the latter stands in need of his counsel; he sends him often as ambassador to foreign courts; he will consequently not permit him to fight."

"I must first ransom my uncle."

"Yes . . . I made some inquiries about Lichtenstein. He is not here and will not be at Raciazk; he was sent to the king in England to ask for archers. As far as your uncle is concerned do not trouble your head about it. One word from the king or the princess will cause the grand master to prevent bargaining about the ransom."

"So much the more so, as I have an important prisoner, a knight, de Lorche, who is famous among them and is a powerful lord. He would be very glad to bow before you and make your acquaintance: there is no one who adores famous knights more than he does."

Then he beckoned to de Lorche, who was already informed with whom Zbyszko was conversing, and who eagerly approached, and actually blushed, for he was anxious to know such a renowned knight as Powala was.

When Zbyszko introduced him, the Gueldre elegantly and most gracefully bowed and said:

“There would be only one greater honor for me than that of pressing your hand, and that is to fight you in battle or challenge you in the lists.”

The mighty knight of Taczew smiled; he looked like a mountain in the presence of little de Lorche.

“And I shall be happy to meet you only in joyous tournament; God grant nowhere else.”

But de Lorche hesitated for a while, then he replied with a certain bashfulness:

“If you only were willing, noble lord, to assert that Panna Agnieszka of Dlugolas is not the most beautiful and the most virtuous lady in the world. . . . I should be much honored . . . to contradict and . . .”

He did not continue, but looked straight into Powala's eyes, measuring his strength with admiration, but keenly and attentively.

But Powala, be it because he knew that he was able to crush him like a nut between his two fingers, or that he was of an exceedingly kind and jovial character, burst out into loud laughter and said:

“Bah! I once vowed to the Princess of Burgundy. She was then ten years older than myself. If you, sir, are willing to assert now that my princess is not older than your lady Agnieszka, then we must necessarily mount our horses . . .”

De Lorche looked for a while at the knight of Taczew with astonishment. Then his face began to twitch; finally he too laughed heartily, whereupon Powala bent and grasped de Lorche by his hips and lifted him up suddenly and rocked him with such ease as though he were an infant.

“Pax! Pax!” he said, “as Bishop Kropidlo said. . . . You have succeeded, O knight, and by God, I will never challenge you for any lady —”

Then he pressed him in his arms and lowered him to the ground. Just at that moment the trumpets sounded at the gate of the courtyard, and Prince Ziemowit of Plock with his spouse entered.

"The princes of this place arrive before Prince Janusz," said Powala to Zbyszko, "although the banquet is at the *starosta's*, they are always the landlords in Plock. Come with me to the princess, you know her from Krakow, where she interceded before the king in your behalf."

Then he took him by the hand and led him through the courtyard. Behind the prince and princess came the gentlemen and the ladies of the court.

Owing to the presence of the king, the whole retinue were beautifully attired, so much so that the whole courtyard brightly gleamed as with flowers.

Zbyszko and Powala approached: the former looked over the faces from a distance with the object of finding some one he knew, but he suddenly stopped with wonderment.

There, quite close to the princess he observed indeed a familiar figure and well-known face, but so dignified, so beautiful and so lady-like, that he could not believe his own eyes.

"Is that Jagienka, or the daughter of a prince?"

Indeed, it was Jagienka Zychowna of Zgorzelice. When their eyes met, she gave to him a smile of friendship and pity at the same time; then she paled a little and lowered her eyelids. She stood with a golden fillet upon her dark hair; in her exceeding splendid beauty, tall and wonderful, she looked not only like a princess, but a real queen.

## CHAPTER IV.

ZBYSZKO offered his humble services to the princess, but she did not recognize him at first, for it was long since she had seen him, and it was not until he told her his name that she said :

“Indeed, I thought that you belonged to the royal court. You are Zbyszko of Bogdaniec. How then! Your uncle, the old knight of Bogdaniec, was our guest here, and I remember how tears streamed from our eyes when he told us of your sad adventures.

“Did you recover your lady? Where is she now?”

“She died, gracious lady. . . .”

“Oh, good Jesus! Don't tell me that. I am greatly grieved and moved to tears. There is only one consolation, and that is that she is surely in heaven, and that you are still young. Mighty God! That poor creature has vanished—so would every woman. But there is recompense for everything in heaven; you will find her there! Is the old knight of Bogdaniec with you?”

“No, he is a prisoner in the hands of the Knights of the Cross, and I am going to ransom him.”

“So, he also did not meet with success. He seemed to me a man of keen understanding, a man of many resources. But how are you going to ransom him? Will you come to us? I shall be glad to have you as my guest. I tell you candidly, that he is as full of understanding as you are of gallantry.”



"I specially came here, gracious lady, to enlist your grace's good offices in his behalf."

"Well, then, come to-morrow morning before we go hunting. I shall then have leisure. . . ."

Her further words were cut short by the sound of trumpets and drums announcing the arrival of Prince and Princess Janusz of Mazovia. As the princess of Plock and Zbyszko were standing quite near the entrance, Princess Anna Danuta observed him and at once approached him, and paid no attention to the obeisance of the host, the *starosta*.

At the sight of her, the heart of the young man was torn anew. He knelt before her and embraced her knees in silence. But she bent over him, pressing his temples tenderly with her hands, and shed tear after tear upon his blond head, just like a mother who weeps over the misfortunes of her own son. And to the great astonishment of the courtiers and guests, she wept for a long time, repeating, "O Jesus, merciful Jesus!" Then she raised Zbyszko and said:

"I weep for her, for my own dear Danuska; I also weep for you. Nevertheless, God has ordained that your labor was in vain and so are our tears. But tell me about her and her death. I should like to hear it and shall not have enough even if it lasts till midnight."

And she took him aside in the same manner as Zawisza had done. The guests who did not know Zbyszko and were unacquainted with his adventures, began to ask one another about his misfortunes. Therefore their conversation for some time was only about Zbyszko, Danusia, and Jurand. The ambassadors of the Knights of the Cross asked also Friedrich von Wenden, *comthur* of Torun, who

was sent to meet the king, and John von Schönfeld, *comthur* of Osterode. The latter was a German, but born in Silesia. He spoke the Polish language well. He informed himself without difficulty and heard the story from Jasko of Zabierza, who was of Prince Janusz's court.

The master himself looked upon Danveld and de Loewe as addicted to the black art.

Then he immediately thought that such a declaration would seriously prejudice the Order and cast a shadow upon them like that which once fell upon the Knights Templars, so he lost no time in saying, that that was mere idle talk, and not based on truth, and that such people did not exist among them.

But the lord of Taczew who was standing near him, replied :

“ Those who hindered the baptism of Lithuania may also loath the cross.”

“ We bear the cross upon our cloak,” haughtily replied Schönfeld.

“ It is also necessary to carry it in the heart,” rejoined Powala.

The trumpets sounded louder still and the king entered, followed by the archbishop of Gniezno, the bishop of Krakow, the bishop of Plock, the castellan of Krakow and several other dignitaries and courtiers. Among the latter were Zyndram of Maszkowic, with the sun upon his escutcheon, and the young Prince Jamont, the king's bodyguard. The king had not changed much during the time since Zbyszko had seen him at Krakow. His cheeks still possessed the bright redness, the same long hair falling over his shoulders, which he occasionally adjusted behind his ears, and the same rest-

less sparkling eyes. The only difference Zbyszko saw was that the king possessed more dignity and his demeanor appeared more majestic, because he felt himself more firmly established upon the throne than at the time of Queen Jadwiga's death, (when he was about to leave it, and was uncertain whether he would sit upon it again) and as though conscious of his great strength and power. Both the prince and princess of Mazowsze placed themselves at his side. In front were the invited German ambassadors, kneeling. These were surrounded by the above named courtiers. The walls surrounding the courtyard trembled from the incessant shouts, the sound of trumpets and the beating of kettle drums.

When silence was finally established, Von Wenden, the envoy of the Knights of the Cross, started to say something about the affairs of the Order; but as soon as the king learned the trend of his words, he impatiently waved his hand, and loudly exclaimed in his wonted gruff voice:

"Silence! We come here for pleasure, to eat and to drink, but not to listen to your rights and parchments."

Not wishing to make the Knight of the Cross think that he was angry with them, he smiled benignantly, and added, that there would be time enough to talk of the affairs of the Order with the Grand Master, when at Raciazk.

Then he said to the Princess Ziemowita:

"Shall we go to-morrow to hunt in the forest?"

That question was an announcement that he did not wish to talk of anything else that evening but of to-morrow's hunt, which he was passionately fond of, and which was the only reason of his

coming to Mazowsze, Malo and Wielkopolska, because there were fewer forests in Great and Little Poland, and some of those regions, owing to the cultivated land, were entirely denuded of forests.

Consequently their faces brightened up because the conversation concerning sport contributed to make the king happy and benevolent. Princess Ziemowita told him where they were going to hunt, and what kind of game they expected to get. Prince Janusz dispatched one of his courtiers to fetch from the city his two experienced huntsmen, who dragged bisons from the enclosures by their horns and crushed the bones of bears, because he wished to show them to the king.

Zbyszko very much desired to approach and pay homage to the king, but was unable to make his way through the crowd. But Prince Jamont, who had apparently forgotten the harsh reply which the young knight had long since given him at Krakow, pleasantly beckoned to him and let him know by winking how he could come near. But at that very moment a hand touched Zbyszko's arm, and quite close to him a sad, sweet voice called :

“ Zbyszko ! ”

The young man turned round and saw Jagienka before him. As he had been hitherto occupied with his salutations to Prince and Princess Ziemowita, and the Prince and Princess Janusz, he had been unable to get near her. Therefore, taking advantage of the confusion which was caused by the king's arrival, she had come to him.

“ Zbyszko,” she repeated, “ may God and our most holy lady comfort you ! ”

“ God reward you ! ” replied the young knight, and he gazed gratefully into her blue eyes, which

at that moment were bedewed with tears. Then both were silent, and although she came to him as a kind, sad sister, yet at first he dared not speak to her in her queenly figure, and in her brilliant court costume she was quite different from the Jagienka whom he had once known at Zgorzelice and Bogdaniec. But Jagienka thought that he had nothing more to say in response to her words.

It was apparent from their faces that both of them were embarrassed. But at that moment there was a stir in the courtyard and the king sat down to the banquet. Princess Januszowna came to Zbyszko and requested him to serve her now as he did once in Krakow.

The young man, therefore, was obliged to leave Jagienka, and when the guests sat down Zbyszko took his post behind the princess's chair to change the plates and serve her with water and wine. But whilst occupied with his duties he involuntarily cast glances now and then at Jagienka, who, as the lady in waiting to the princess of Plock, sat at her side, and he could not help involuntarily admiring her growth. During the last few years Jagienka had grown considerably. But her increased stature had not so much altered her as her dignified manner, of which she had not possessed even a trace in the past. Then she used to appear on horseback, riding through the woods attired in a fur jacket; and her hair tangled and full of leaves might have made one mistake her for a peasant girl; but now, at the first glance she appeared a young lady of high birth and blue blood. There was perfect calm in her features. Zbyszko also remarked that her wonted joviality was gone, but that was no surprise to him, as he attributed it to

the death of her father. But what caused him the greatest wonder was her dignified manner. It seemed to him at first that her finery gave her that appearance. He therefore looked constantly, now at the golden fillet that encircled her snow-white brow and dark hair which fell in two plaits down her back; now at the exquisitely fitting sky-blue robe, with the edges embroidered with purple, through which was outlined her shapely figure and maiden breast; and he said to himself: "You are a real princess." Then he concluded that the change could not be attributed to her exquisite dress. Even if she were to put on a simple fur jacket, he would not now venture to be as familiar with her as he had been at Zgorzelice of old.

He also observed that various young, as well as older knights, were covetously ogling her. Once whilst he was changing the plates for the princess he suddenly observed de Lorche gazing at her, and his face had the look of a saint in ecstasy. When Zbyszko saw that he became indignant. The Guelder's behavior did not escape Princess Janusz's observation; when she recognized him, she said:

"You see de Lorche! I am sure that he is again in love with somebody, for he is completely dazzled."

Then she bent a little over the table, and looking sideways toward Jagienka, said:

"Faith! All little lights are dimmed in the presence of that torch!"

Yet Zbyszko was attracted to Jagienka because she appeared to him as a loving and beloved relative, and he felt that he could not find a better partner for his sorrows, and that he could not find

another heart with as much compassion as hers ; but that evening it was impossible for him to speak to her, one reason was that he was occupied with serving the princess, and another reason was that during the banquet the minstrels sang songs or the trumpeters produced such noisy music, that one could scarcely hear his next neighbor. Both princesses, as well as the ladies, got up early from the king's tables. But the princes and the knights who were accustomed to stay late into the night at their cups remained. Jagienka, who carried the cushion of the princess's chair, tarried awhile, then she also left, but at the door she again smiled and nodded her head to Zbyszko.

It was not until late, almost dawn, that the two young knights, Zbyszko and de Lorche, with their armor-bearers, returned to the inn.

For a while they walked absorbed in their thoughts, but when they were near home de Lorche said something to his Pomeranian shield-bearer, who knew the Polish language very well ; the latter at once turned to Zbyszko and said :

“ My lord wishes to ask your grace something.”

“ Well ! ” replied Zbyszko.

He turned again to his master and conversed for a moment and then the Pomeranian with a smile under his moustache, said :

“ My lord wishes to ask you whether the young lady with whom you conversed before the banquet began is a mortal being, or perhaps an angel, or some saint ? ”

“ Tell your master,” replied Zbyszko with a certain impatience. “ Tell your master you have asked me the same question and that I am astonished to hear it. How is it ; in Spychow he told

me that he preferred the comely Lithuania ladies, and for that reason he was preparing to go to Prince Witold's court; then for the same reason, he wished to go to Plock, and to-day he wished to challenge the knight of Taczew concerning Agnieszka of Dlugolas, and now he is aiming at another. Does he consider it good behavior or knightly honor?"

When de Lorche heard the reply through the Pomeranian, he sighed deeply; he lifted up his eyes toward the paling sky and replied to Zbyszko's reproaches as follows:

"You are right. It is neither good conduct nor knightly honor. I am a sinful man and am unworthy to wear knightly spurs. As to Lady Agnieszka of Dlugolas, it is quite true that I vowed to her, and God grant that I continue in it. But mark how my story will move you when I tell you of my terrible experience in the castle of Czersk."

Then he sighed again, looked once more toward the sky which was beginning to brighten up in the east, and waited until the Pomeranian finished translating his words. Then he continued:

"She told me that her enemy was a certain magician whose dwelling-place was in a tower in the depths of the forest, and who yearly dispatched a dragon against her, that that dragon came to the walls of Czersk every spring and waited for a chance to kidnap the young lady. As soon as I heard that, I resolved to fight the dragon. Ah! please listen to the continuation of my narrative. When I presented myself at the appointed place, I observed a ghastly motionless monster waiting for me. My soul was filled with gladness because I



thought that I should either perish or rescue the young lady from the filthy jaws of the monster, and thereby earn immortal fame. But when I came near and charged with my spear at the monster, what do you think I observed? A big straw-sack upon wooden wheels, with a tail made of straw wisp; and, instead of gaining fame I became the laughing-stock of the people. The result of this was that I challenged two Mazovian knights to the lists and I received great injury from them. That happened to me because I desired to adore my only beloved one above everything."

The Pomeranian, who was translating the story of the knight, to avoid breaking out into laughter, pressed his tongue to his cheek and even bit it. Zbyszko at any other time would have surely laughed himself, but pain and sorrow had destroyed his jovial disposition, therefore he replied gravely:

"Perhaps that was done as a practical joke, but not from malice!"

"That is the reason I have forgiven her," replied de Lorche. "The best proof I can give that I have done so is that I wished to challenge the knight of Taczew in upholding her beauty and virtues."

"Don't do it," said Zbyszko gravely.

"I know that that is death, but I prefer death to a life of constant pain and affliction."

"But Pan Powala no more occupies his mind with such things. Better therefore go with me tomorrow morning and make friends with him. . . ."

"I will do so willingly because I like him; he made a great impression upon my mind, but tomorrow he is going to the hunt with the king."

"Then let us go very early. The king is fond

of the chase, nevertheless he does not despise rest, and he banqueted late to-night."

And they did so, but without success. The Bohemian informed them that Powala passed the night in the king's apartments. However, they were recompensed for the disappointment, for Prince Janusz met them on the road, and ordered them to join his retinue, which enabled them to take part in the hunt. Whilst on the way to the forest Zbyszko found also an opportunity to converse with Prince Jamont who gave him good news.

"When the king was going to retire," he said, "I reminded him of you and your adventures at Krakow. Powala was present, he also told the king about the captivity of your uncle, and begged the king to interest himself in your uncle's behalf. The king, who is exceedingly angry with them concerning the kidnapping of little Jasiiek of Kretkowa and other outrages, became more indignant and in outspoken language said: 'No more good words for them but pikes! pikes!' Powala intentionally threw more fuel into the flames. In the morning when the envoys of the Order waited at the gate, the king did not look at them, even when they knelt on the ground. Ay! they will not procure now a promise from the king that he will not assist Prince Witold, and they will be in a quandary. But you, rest assured, that as far as your uncle is concerned, the king will not neglect to press the grand master himself."

Zbyszko was overjoyed at the news and so was Jagienka who accompanied the Princess Ziemowitowa to the forest. She endeavored to ride beside Zbyszko upon their return from the hunt. There was much freedom during the hunt; they returned

in pairs and as those pairs were not anxious to be too near each other, they were therefore enabled to talk to each other freely. Jagienka knew of Macko's captivity; the Bohemian had informed her. She lost no time in petitioning the princess, and she got a letter from her to the grand master; she also demanded that Von Wenden, the *comthur* of Torun should also mention the affair in his writing of the proceedings in Plock. He praised himself to the princess that he had written, 'wishing to soothe the king, it would be unwise to put obstacles in the way of that affair.' And it was of great moment to the master just now to do his utmost to please the king and then he might with entire safety turn all his powers against Witold, against whom hitherto the Order had been able to do nothing.

"I obtained what I could, being anxious to avoid delay," finally said Jagienka. "And as the king does not refuse his sister in great affairs, he will surely endeavor to satisfy her in lesser. I have therefore the best hopes."

"If the affair were not with such treacherous people," replied Zbyszko, "I would simply go and ransom him and there would be an end of it. But with them it might happen as it did to Tolima. They will not only take the money, but also seize the bearer; unless he be protected by some power."

"I understand that," replied Jagienka.

"You comprehend everything now," observed Zbyszko, "and as long as I live I shall be very thankful to you."

Jagienka looked at him with her sad, beautiful eyes, and asked:

"Why do you not address me 'thou,' as to an acquaintance from our childhood?"

"I do not know," he candidly replied. "That is not easy now . . . and you are no more that little sprat of old, but . . . as it were . . . something entirely . . ."

He could find no comparison, but she interrupted him and said:

"Because I am a few years older,—and the Germans have also killed my father in Szlonsk."

"True!" replied Zbyszko. "God grant him the light of glory."

They rode for some time together absorbed in thought and seemed to be listening to the vesper hum of the pines; then she asked again:

"After you have ransomed Macko, will you remain in this region?"

Zbyszko looked at her with apparent astonishment, because hitherto his distress and sorrow had prevented him from thinking about the future. He therefore lifted up his eyes in a reflective mood and after a moment replied:

"Merciful Christ, I don't know! How should I know? Only one thing I do know: that wherever I go, my sorrow will accompany me. Ah me! Hard luck! . . . I shall ransom my uncle, then I shall probably go to Witold, and execute my vows against the Knights of the Cross; there perhaps I shall perish."

The eyes of the young lady were suffused with tears; she then bent slightly toward Zbyszko and entreated him in a whisper:

"Don't perish; no, don't perish!"

Then they ceased speaking again until they reached the walls of the city, when Zbyszko awoke from his thoughts which worried him and he said:

"And you . . . and thou—will you remain here at the court?"

"No," she replied, "I feel lonely without my brother and Zgorzelice. Czstan and Wilk must have got married; even if they are not, I fear them no more."

"God grant that Uncle Macko will take you to Zgorzelice. He is your real friend and you can trust him in everything. But remember him also. . . ."

"I promise you solemnly that I will treat him as if I were his own child." Then she burst into a flood of tears, for her heart was very heavy.

\* \* \* \* \*

Powala of Taczew called upon Zbyszko on the following day and told him, "The king will go after Corpus Christi to Raciask where he will meet the grand master of the Order, and you are ordered to join the king's knights and start with us."

Zbyszko was overjoyed when he heard the good news, not only because of his enrollment among the king's knights which protected him against the treachery and stratagems of the Knights of the Cross; but also because of the great honor conferred upon him; for he now belonged to the knights, among whom were Zawisza Czarny, and his brother Farurej, Kruczek, and Powala himself, Krzon of Kozichlow, Stach of Charbimowice, Paszko Zlodziej of Biskupice and Lis of Targowisko, and many others of the most renowned and terrible knights; and King Jagiello had not taken with him many of those knights. He left some of them at home, others looked for adventures beyond the seas in distant countries; but he knew that

with those present, he could proceed even to Malborg without fearing the treachery of the Knights of the Cross, and in case of need crush its walls with their strong arms and cut his way through the Germans. Zbyszko's heart might well have been filled with pride at the thought of having such companions. So that in the first few moments Zbyszko even forgot his sorrow, and pressing the hands of Powala of Taczew, said joyfully :

“To you, and nobody else, I owe all. To you ! yes, to you !”

“Partly to me,” replied Powala, “and partly to the princess here, but above all you owe it to our gracious lord to whom you must go at once and embrace his feet so that he may not consider you ungrateful.”

“I am ready to perish for him, so help me God !” exclaimed Zbyszko.

## CHAPTER V.

The meeting at Raciazk upon the island in the Vistula, which had taken place about the festival of Corpus Christi, terminated under evil omen, and did not lead to such good understandings as that which took place two years later, in which the king succeeded in obtaining from the Knights of the Cross the district of Dobrzyn and the towns of Dobrzyn and Bobrownik, which were treacherously pledged to the Order by Opolezyk. Jagiello was greatly incensed when he arrived, concerning the calumnies which the Knights of the Cross had spread in the western courts, yea, even in Rome, about him, and at the same time he was enraged at their dishonesty. The grand master was unwilling to carry on negotiations concerning Dobrzyn; he acted thus purposely. He and other dignitaries of the Order daily repeated to the Poles: "We are not making war upon you nor upon Lithuania, but Zmuzd is ours; Witold himself gave it to us. If you promise us that you will not assist him, then the war against him will soon be terminated; and then will there be time enough to speak about Dobrzyn, when we will grant you many concessions." But the king's councillors who were quick sighted and experienced and well acquainted with the falsehood of the Order did not let themselves be deceived. "If you increase in strength your audacity will also increase," answered the councillors. "You say that you have nothing against Lithuania, and yet you want to place Skirwoillo

upon the throne in Wilno; and, for God's sake! that is Jagiello's property, who alone wishes to leave Witold in his place. You are therefore advised to check yourselves or our great king will punish you."

Then the grand master replied: "If the king is the true lord of Lithuania, let him order Witold to discontinue the war and restore Zmudz to the Order, otherwise the Order will be forced to strike Witold where he is most vulnerable." In that manner the intricate arguments were carried on from morn till eve, as a wanderer returns to the point whence he started. The king was not willing to bind himself to anything, his impatience constantly increased, and he told the grand master that if the Zmudz people had been happy under the Knights of the Cross, Witold would not even have moved a finger against the Order, for he then would have been unable to find a pretext or cause. The grand master who was a peaceful man and more able than the other brethren, took pains in the affair with the powerful Jagiello. He endeavored to please the king; he therefore took no notice of the murmurings proceeding from the furious and haughty *comthurs*. He did not spare flattering words and, at times, he even became humble. But even in that state of humility he sometimes intimated hidden threats. That procedure led to nothing. The negotiations of the most important affairs were broken off. On the second day they occupied themselves with minor cases. The king severely attacked the Order for maintaining bands of robbers, for their incursions and pillage across the frontier and for the kidnapping of the Jurands and little Jasiak of Kretkowa, and for the murder



of peasants and fishermen. The grand master disclaimed it and twisted and swore that those things were done without his knowledge; and made counter accusations that not only Witold, but the Polish knights assisted the Pagan Zmudzians against the Knights of the Cross. In proof of it, to make his case strong, he quoted the affair of Macko of Bogdaniec. Fortunately the king knew from Powala why Macko, the knight of Bogdaniec, went to Zmudz—he therefore was able to reply to that accusation with great ease, especially as Zbyszko himself was present, and the two brothers von Baden were also there waiting for a chance to challenge the Polish knights to the lists.

But that also led to nothing. The Knights of the Cross would have liked, in case they were successful, to invite the great king to Torun, and there to arrange feasts and public games in his honor; but in face of unsuccessful negotiations which produced mutual displeasure and anger, they had no desire for pleasure. Apart from that, the knights paraded early in the morning to demonstrate their strength and agility. But as the jovial prince Jamont remarked, even that was disagreeable to the Knights of the Cross, when Powala of Taczew appeared close by Arnold von Baden's side, and Dobek of Olesnica with a lance, and Lis of Targowisko surpassed everybody in his jumping over his horse.

By that means Zbyszko had an opportunity to come to terms with Arnold von Baden concerning the ransom. De Lorche, who was a great lord and of considerable importance, looked down upon Arnold and opposed him and intimated that he would pay the ransom himself. But Zbyszko

thought that knightly honor bound him to pay that amount in *grzywien* according to agreement, therefore when even Arnold was inclined to lessen the amount due, he would not consent to it, nor to the intervention of de Lorche.

Arnold von Baden was a common man; his virtue consisted only in the enormous strength of his arms; he was a simpleton, and somewhat greedy, but very honest. He did not possess the usual cunning of the Knights of the Cross, and that was the reason that he was willing to lessen the amount of the ransom. "I did not come here to take part in the negotiations with the great king," he said, "but I came here for the purpose of exchanging prisoners. In that case you will be able to get your uncle for nothing. I should prefer to get something because I am always short of cash. It often happens that I have scarcely enough for three pots of beer daily. When I have less than five or six pots I feel wanting." Zbyszko was displeased at his words. "I shall pay you every cent, for I have pledged my knightly word. I don't wish to bargain, so you may know that we can afford it." Then Arnold pressed his hand, and both Poles and the Knights of the Cross praised Zbyszko, adding: "It is right that such a young man is belted and wears spurs, because he is aware of all that concerns honor and dignity."

Meanwhile, the king and the grand master were engaged in the exchange of prisoners during which strange things happened, of which the bishops and dignitaries of the kingdom wrote later on to the Pope and to various courts. The Poles had indeed regular prisoners, but they were all full-grown strong men, who were taken with arms in hand in

fight and encounters beyond the frontier. But the prisoners in the hands of the Knights of the Cross consisted mostly of women and children, captured in night attacks for ransom. The Pope himself had given his opinion. Nevertheless, throughout the tortuous shamming and subterfuges, John von Felde, the procurator of the Knights of the Cross at the apostolic seat in Rome, loudly expressed his anger and indignation against the Order.

But as to Macko there were difficulties. The grand master, in order to add weight to every step, made apparent but not real objections. He affirmed that Macko, being a Christian knight, and fighting with the Zmudzians against the Knights of the Cross, ought to be, according to right, condemned to death. In vain did the royal councillors strive to bring forth every argument such as what they knew of the affair of Jurand and his daughter, and of the terrible wrongs done to them and to the knight of Bogdaniec. The advocates of the Order admitted this, but in reply the grand master adduced peculiar reasons, in the very same terms as Princess Alexandra Ziemowitowa once spoke to the knight of Bogdaniec:

“You give yourselves out as lambs and us as wolves; meanwhile not one of the four wolves who took part in the kidnapping of Jurandowna is alive, while the lambs walk about in perfect safety.”

That might have been so. Nevertheless the Lord of Taczew, who was present during the deliberations, replied as follows: “It is true, but have not all those wolves who have been slain, perished with swords in their hands?”

The grand master had nothing to say to that reply, but when he observed that the king's brow was contracting and his eyes sparkling, he gave way, for he did not wish to bring the king's anger to an explosion. They arranged later that each side should send envoys to receive the prisoners. Those selected for the Poles were Zyndram of Maszkowa, who was desirous to closely inspect the strength of the Knights of the Cross, and the Knight Powala with Zbyszko.

Zbyszko owed that friendly service to Prince Jamont who interested himself in his behalf with the king thinking that as Zbyszko was a young man he would quickly recognize his uncle and surely take him away, provided he went there as the king's envoy. They did not refuse the prince's petition, because the prince's jovial disposition made him the favorite of the king and the whole court. Zbyszko thanked him heartily, for now he was quite sure that he would get back his uncle from the hands of the Knights of the Cross.

"None will grudge you your position with the king," said Zbyszko. "You are there for the public good owing to your familiarity with the king, and there is perhaps nobody who possesses so kind a heart as yours."

"I am well satisfied in my position near His Majesty, but I would prefer to be in the field against the Knights of the Cross. I envy you in that you have already fought them."

Then he added :

"Von Wenden the *comthur* of Torun, left yesterday; this evening you will go to him with the grand master and the whole retinue."

"Afterward to Malborg?"

"Yes."

Then Prince Jamont smiled.

"The distance is not far, but a sour one for them; the Germans got nothing from the king, they will also get no comfort from Witold. It may be he is gathering the whole Lithuanian power and is marching into Zmudz."

"There will be a great war if the king assists him."

"All our knights pray God for it, and although the king loathes the shedding of Christian blood, he will nevertheless support Witold with grain and money, and moreover he will not hinder some of the Polish knights from going there to enlist as volunteers."

"True, as I live," replied Zbyszko. "Perhaps for that very reason the very Order will declare war against the king."

"O no!" replied the prince. "As long as their present master lives there will be no war."

He was right. Zbyszko had known the master for a long time, but now upon the road to Malborg he was, in company with Zyndram and Powala, constantly at his side. He could observe him and learn to know him better. During that journey his convictions concerning the Grand Master Konrad von Jungingen were strengthened; he was not a bad man nor corrupt at heart. He was often obliged to proceed in the wrong way, since the whole structure of the Order rested upon wrong. He was therefore obliged to do wrong, for the Order was constructed upon public wrongs. He was obliged to tell falsehoods because lying was inherited with the insignia of the grand master, and he, for many years, had got accustomed to look

upon it as political craft. But he was not a cruel man; he feared God's judgment, he curbed the haughtiness and greed of those dignitaries of the Order who were bent upon declaring war against Jagiello. Nevertheless, he was a weak man. The Order had been accustomed, for whole ages, to lie in wait for the foreigner and rob him, and forcibly seize or draw near adjacent lands, so that Konrad was not only unable to check that greed for plunder, but against his own will he went with the current, and endeavored to satisfy it.

It was long since the day of Winrych von Knipröde, the time of iron discipline, which the Order practiced to the wonderment of the whole world. Also in the time of the grand master who preceded Jungingen, Konrad Wallenrode, the Order had actually become drunk with its constantly increasing power, and he had been unable to check even for a moment its disorders. The Order became stunned or drunk with prosperity and the people's blood, so much so that the bonds which strengthened and kept them united were loosened. The grand master checked the Order as much as he was able and preached right and justice. He specially lessened the pressure of the iron hand of the Order which so heavily oppressed the peasants, the inhabitants, and even the clergy and nobility who lived upon the lands held by the Knights of the Cross. So that it frequently happened in the neighborhood of Malborg, that a peasant or inhabitant here and there boasted not only of possessing enough, but of riches. But in the distant domains, where the cruelty and licentiousness ruled supreme, the *com-thurs* trampled upon the rights of the people, intensified oppression and rapacity, and extorted the

last penny by means of taxes which they imposed upon the people, or even without any pretext whatsoever. They squeezed out tears and very often blood, so that throughout the whole country there was heard a universal groan of misery and complaint. Even if at times, for the welfare of the Order, as was often the case in Zmudz, command was given to exercise more mildness, yet such orders were in vain, owing to the insubordination of the *comthurs* and their innate ruthlessness. Konrad von Jungingen therefore as leader, saw no other means than to drop the reins of the unruly horses which he drove, and leave the chariot to its fate. He was often overwhelmed with evil forebodings and the following prophetic thoughts crossed his mind: "I caused their prosperity and have established them upon the threshold of Christian lands, now they oppose me, for they care not for the souls and have no mercy upon the bodies of that people that has blindly turned to the Catholic religion and to me, and, instead of teaching them God's commandments, they have made slaves of them, and withheld the holy sacraments. They thus sentence them to a greater hell than if they had been left in paganism. And they wage war so that they may increase their gains. For this reason, the time will come when their teeth will be broken, and their right hand will be cut off, and their right foot will be lamed, so that they shall acknowledge their iniquities."

The grand master knew that those mysterious accusations against the Knights of the Cross, which were made at the manifestation of St. Bridget, were true. He knew that the fabric, made of foreign wrongs and raised upon foreign

land, supported by falsehood, fraud and cruelty, could not stand much longer. He feared that the structure, undermined by the flood of tears and blood, would collapse by one blow from the hands of the Poles. He knew that this carriage, with runaway horses, must be shattered in an abyss. He therefore endeavored to postpone, if possible, that day of wrath and calamity. For that reason he was determined, in spite of his weakness, firmly to oppose those who from pride and insolence counselled war against Poland. They accused him in vain of faintheartedness. In vain did the *comthurs*, who lived beyond the frontier, urge war with their full strength. But he, when the conflagration was about to break out, always withdrew at the last moment. Then he thanked God at Malborg for his success in averting the stroke of the sword suspended above the necks of Knights of the Cross.

But he knew that it must come to pass. Consequently the conviction that the Order did not stand upon God's truth, but upon unrighteousness and falsehood, and the consciousness that the day of judgment was at hand, rendered him one of the most unhappy beings in the universe. If he could avert it he would give his blood or life to alter the existing state of affairs; or if there were only time enough to turn the Knights of the Cross into the right path, he would also give it. But he was convinced that there was no time left. To return would be tantamount to relinquishing all those rich and fertile possessions which the Order had conquered, God knows how long ago, and with those possessions giving up such rich cities as Dantzic. That was not sufficient. It would be



necessary to relinquish Zmudz, the establishments in Lithuania, sheathe the sword, and finally entirely retreat from those lands, the original owners of which no longer existed, to whom the Order might return them; and perhaps nothing remained but to go back to Palestine, or to one of the Greek islands, and settle down there so that the cross might be protected by the faithful knights against the Saracens. But that was an impossibility, because if the decree for the destruction of the Order were to be issued, who would agree to that course. What grand master would desire such a thing? The soul and life of Konrad von Jungingen was plunged in the darkness, but a man who would give such counsel would be out of his senses, and as groping in the dark. It was, therefore, necessary to continue on and on to the very day in which God himself had appointed the end.

Consequently he proceeded, but there was trouble and sadness in his soul. His beard and hair turned grey, and his once bright eyes were half covered with his heavy brows. Zbyszko had not even once detected a smile upon his face. He had not a threatening look; it did not even appear cloudy. But he looked like one who is troubled and suffering from some secret trouble. When in his armor, with the cross upon his breast, which had in the centre a black eagle upon a red square, and covered with a large white mantle, also ornamented with a cross, he gave an impression of authority, majesty and sadness. Konrad was originally of a jovial disposition, and fond of festivity, and even now he did not withdraw from stately banquets, shows and tourneys; nay, he even arranged them himself, but as far as taking part in the various enjoyments, he

was neither among the crowd of the brilliant knighthood, who came as guests to Malborg, nor among the tumultuous merry-making multitudes, nor amid the clamor of trumpets, nor the clatter of arms, nor the guests and revellers; now he was never cheerful. When those about him appeared to be surcharged with power, splendor, inexhaustible wealth, and uninterrupted power; when the envoys of the emperor and other western kings were loudly proclaiming that the Order alone could provide for the whole kingdom and the powers of the whole world, he was the only one who was not deluded, the only one who remembered the ill-boding words of St. Bridget: "The time will come when their teeth will be broken, their right hand cut off, and their right foot lamed, so that they may acknowledge their transgressions."

## CHAPTER VI.

THEY traveled along the hard road by Chelmno to Grudziadz, where they remained one day and night, and where the grand master had to adjust affairs concerning fishing, between the Knights of the Cross, *starosta* of the castle, and the nobles of the neighborhood whose lands were situated near the Vistula. Thence they went down the river in flat-bottomed boats, belonging to the Knights of the Cross, as far as Malborg. Zyndram of Maszkowic, Powala of Taczew and Zbyszko were all the time at the side of the grand master, who was curious to know what impression the sight of the strength of the Knights of the Cross would make upon Zyndram. But the master was more especially concerned about it because he was aware that Zyndram was not only an exceedingly powerful and terrible knight in single combat, but also an extraordinarily experienced warrior. There was none like him throughout the whole kingdom who knew how to lead a great army, place it in battle array, construct and lay low castles, and build bridges over wide rivers, being also acquainted with the equipment of various nations, and with all manners of carrying on war. The grand master, knowing the importance of the man and that much depended upon his mission, thought that if he could overawe him by showing him the great army and riches of the Order, the war might yet be postponed for a long time to come. Above all, the very sight of Malborg might strike terror into the

heart of every Pole, because that stronghold, counting the high, middle and forecastles, had none other in all the world to equal it.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst they were sailing upon the river Nogat, the knights descried from a distance the strong bastions outlined against the sky. It was a bright and clear day, consequently they could observe it perfectly well, and, after a while, when the boats came near, they beheld the shining roof of the church in the fortress and the gigantic walls towering one above the other. Part of them was brick color, but most of them were covered with grey and white, which only the masons of the Knights of the Cross understood how to arrange. Their magnitude surpassed everything that the Polish knights had ever seen. It appeared as though the buildings were growing one upon another, forming a kind of hill, whose summit was the old castle, the slope, the middle, and the outlying part the forecastle. At the sight of that gigantic and extraordinary fortified nest of armed monks, even the usually long and gloomy face of the grand master brightened up a little.

“*Ex luto Marienburg*, Marienburg is of mud,” said the master, turning toward Zyndram, “but that mud human hand cannot crumble.”

Zyndram did not reply, but silently took in all the bastions and the magnitude of the walls, which were fortified with prodigious battlements.

After a moment's silence Konrad von Jungingen added:

“You, sirs, who are experienced in matters con-

<sup>1</sup> Malborg was completely destroyed by Frederick II., king of Prussia, after the fall of the Polish commonwealth.

cerning strongholds, tell me what you think about this one!"

"It seems to me that this is an impregnable fortress," replied the Polish knight thoughtfully, "but . . ."

"But what fault do you find in it?"

"But every stronghold might change its lord."

Then the grand master furrowed his brow.

"What causes you to think so, tell me?"

"The judgment and verdict of God are hidden from human eyes."

Then he looked again at the walls thoughtfully. Meanwhile Zbyszko to whom Powala translated Zyndram's proper reply, looked at him with wonder and thankfulness.

At that moment he was struck with the resemblance between Zyndram and the Zmudzian leader Skirwoillo; both possessed immense heads, as though driven in between broad shoulders; both possessed strong chests and had short thick legs.

Then, the grand master, not wishing the Poles to have the last word, said again:

"They say that our Marienburg is six times greater than Wawel."

"There they have not as much room as you have here on the level ground," replied the lord of Maszkowic, "but our hearts at the Wawel are greater."

Konrad raised his eyebrows in astonishment.

"I do not understand you."

"But what do hearts matter in the castles if they have no churches? Our Cathedral is thrice larger than that last one yonder."

Then he pointed to the small church of the

castle, upon which a gigantic Mosaic figure of the most holy lady shone upon a golden ground.

The grand master was again dissatisfied with the turn of the conversation.

“Quick but strange are your answers, sir,” he said.

Then they arrived. The excellent police of the Knights of the Cross arrived at the castle and town before the grand master; at the ferry there were already waiting a few of the brethren and the trumpeters of the place, who were accustomed to play before the grand master whenever he was ferried across. On the other side, horses were ready; then they mounted and the retinue arrived in the town through the shoemaker's gate, along Sparrow's Bastion, and reached the front of the castle. At the gate the grand master was saluted by the grand *comthur*, Wilhelm von Helfenstein, who only bore the title for the time because a few months before his duties had been executed by Kuno von Lichtenstein, who had been sent to England; then the grand hospitaller, Kuno's relative, Konrad Lichtenstein; the master of the robes, Rumpenheim; and the grand treasurer, Burghard von Wobecke; and finally the little *comthur* who was chief over the workshops and the administration of the castle. Besides these dignitaries there stood about a dozen ordained brethren, who hitherto had directed the affairs of the church in Prussia and heavily oppressed other cloisters, as well as the secular clergy, forcing them even to labor upon the roads, and cut ice blocks; and with them a crowd of unordained brothers, to wit, knights not bound to the *horario* (canonical hours). Their great size and strength,

(the Knights of the Cross rejected all who were not able-bodied) their broad shoulders, bushy beards and fierce faces made them look more like German robber knights than monks. Daring, arrogance and boundless pride were evident from their looks. Konrad was not a favorite because of his timidity in declaring war against Jagiello. More than once he was openly accused at the chapters of pusillanimity. They caricatured him upon the walls and they hired jesters to ridicule him in his presence. Nevertheless they all bowed their heads with much humbleness at his presence, particularly as the grand master arrived with foreign knights; they therefore rushed in a body to take hold of the bridle of his horse and stirrups.

The grand master dismounted and immediately turned to Helfenstein and asked :

“ Is there any news from Werner von Tettingen ? ”

Werner von Tettingen as the grand marshal, or the leader of the armed force of the Knights of the Cross, was at that moment leading an expedition against the Zmudzians and Prince Witold.

“ There is no important news,” Helfenstein replied, “ but there are damages. The savage people destroyed with fire a settlement near Ragenta and a small town near the other castles.”

“ I trust in God, that one great battle will break their malice and stubbornness,” replied the grand master.

Then he lifted up his eyes, and his lips moved in prayer, for a while, for the success of the soldiers of the Order.

Then he pointed toward the Polish knights and said :

“ These are the envoys of the Polish king, the

knight of Maszkowic, the knight of Taczew and the knight of Bogdaniec, who came with us for an exchange of prisoners. Let the *comthur* of the castle show them the rooms for guests and receive them hospitably as it becomes guests."

Then the military brethren began to look with curiosity at the envoys, particularly at Powala of Taczew, whose name as a celebrated warrior was known to some of them. Those who had never heard of his exploits at the courts of Burgundy, Bohemia and Krakow were struck with amazement at his enormous figure and that of his war stallion; which was of such an extraordinary size that it reminded the old travelers, who in their earlier days had visited the Holy Land and Egypt, of camels and elephants.

Some also recognized Zbyszko, who some time before had fought in the lists at Malborg. These greeted Zbyszko amicably. They remembered the friendship contracted between him and the brother of the grand master, Ulrich von Jungingen, who had shown him genuine kindness. They paid the least attention to him who in the near future was destined to strike the most terrible blow at the Order, and that was Zyndram of Maszkowic; because when he dismounted his horse, owing to his peculiar stature, he appeared like a hunchback. His arms long out of all proportion, and short knock-kneed legs, produced hilarity among the younger members of the Order. One of them, a well known joker, with the intention of making some remarks, even approached him, but when he looked in his eyes, the brother lost his desire for making fun and retired in silence.

Meanwhile the *comthur* of the castle had taken



the guests and led them first through to the small courtyard where, besides the schools, the old storehouse and the saddler's workshop, the chapel of St. Nicolas was situated. Then along the Nicolas bridge, they entered into the front castle. The *comthur* led them for a while among strong walls protected here and there with large and small bastions. Zyndram of Maszkowic carefully noticed everything. The leader, even without request, was very eager to show the guests the buildings, as though he was anxious that they should observe everything most accurately.

"In that tremendous structure which your graces behold in front of you to the left are our stables. We are poor monks, but the people assure us that elsewhere even the knights do not live in such quarters, as our horses do."

"The people did not exaggerate so far as poverty is concerned," replied Powala. "But there must be more in this building than stables, seeing that the structure is very tall, and that you do not lead horses upstairs."

"Above the stable which is on the lower floor, and wherein there are four hundred horses, are the storehouses in which there is enough grain for ten years. It will never come to a siege here, but if it should ever come to pass we would not suffer hunger."

Then he led them to the right, and again across the bridge between the bastions of St. Wawrzyniec and Pancerna and entered another immense courtyard.

"Your graces will observe," said the German, "that all that you behold on the northern side is, thank God, impregnable; yet that is only the

‘Vorburg’ (front castle), and as far as strength is concerned it cannot be compared with that of the middle castle whither I am now leading you ; much more so is the high castle.”

A moat and drawbridge separated the middle fortress from the courtyard, and not until they reached the gate of the castle, which was situated upon a considerably higher ground, did the knights, upon the advice of the *comthur*, turn around, and were able once more to view that gigantic quadrangle called “below the castle.” There the structures towered one above the other. It appeared to Zyndram that there he saw a whole town before him. There were inexhaustible stores of wood piled up in layers as tall as houses, heaps of stone balls arranged in pyramids, the cemetery, lazarets, and magazines. Alongside the pond, which was situated in the centre, was the strong red-walled “temple,” so-called, which was the great storehouse of food stuffs for the laborers and the servants. At the northern rampart was another stable where the horses belonging to the knights and the choice horses of the grand master were kept. Along by the mills were the barracks for the shield-bearers and the mercenaries, and on the opposite side were square houses for the various managers and officials of the Order, then came more stores, magazines, baker and clothing shops, foundries, an immense arsenal or “Karwan,” a prison and the old gun shop. Every one of those structures was so strongly built and protected that in case of an attack upon them their holders could defend themselves as in a fortress. Everything was surrounded by walls and formidable bastions ; behind the walls were moats, behind the moats were

gigantic palisades, beyond those palisades toward the west rolled the yellow waves of the Nogat, toward the north and east glistened the deep waters of the pond, and toward the south were situated the yet stronger middle and high castles.

It was a terrible nest, the source of an inexorable power, and in which were assembled two of the then greatest known powers in the world; namely, the spiritual power and that of the sword; whosoever withstood one of them, the other would crush him, and if he who lifted up his arm against both, then they proclaimed in all Christian countries that that arm was raised against those who believed in the cross.

Then the knighthood would rush from all directions to help them. That nest constantly swarmed like in a beehive with men of all trades and professions, and soldiers. In front of the buildings and at the entrances, and the gates, and in the workshops there was always bustle and noise as at a fair. The sound of the hammers and chisels of those who were manufacturing stone balls, the rushing noise of the mills, and treadmills, the neighing of horses, the sound of trumpets and whistles, and calling and ordering were incessant. One could hear all the languages of the world spoken in those courtyards, one could meet there soldiers from all nations; English archers, unfailing marksmen, who could transfix a pigeon tied to a staff with an arrow at a hundred paces, and whose arrows penetrated a coat of mail as easily as if it were cloth; also terrible Swiss foot soldiers, who fought with the two-handed sword; and strong Danes, strong though not given to much eating and drinking; and jovial French knights; and the

taciturn proud Spanish nobles; and the brilliant Italian knights, the most expert swordsmen attired in silk and velvet, but in war in impenetrable armor, forged in Venice; knights from Milan and Florence, from Burgundy and from Frisia; and finally Germans from all German lands. Through that motley crowd were passing the knights of the white mantles as proprietors and chiefs. "The tower full of gold," and literally so; a separate house built in the high castle opposite the residence of the grand master, was actually filled from top to bottom with money, and with bars of precious metal. This the Order allotted to the proper entertainment of the "guests," as well as to the crowds of hired soldiers who were dispatched from that place to the war, and to the different castles; and for the administration expenses of the sheriffs, *starostas* and *comthurs*. Thus by the might of the sword and the spiritual power, immense riches were accumulated, and at the same time an iron rule, which though now relaxed on account of over-confidence and intoxication with power, still held on to its ancient power in its customary style. Monarchs came there not only to fight the Pagans, or borrow money, but also to learn the art of government; knights flocked there to study the art of war, because there was none in the whole world who could teach the way to govern and carry on war so well as the Order.

Formerly when the Order came to these regions, besides the scantily inhabited neighborhood and a few castles which were presented to the Order by the thoughtless Polish prince, they did not possess even a span of land, but now the dominion of the Order was greater than many principalities of the

country, with plenty of fruitful lands, powerful cities, and impregnable castles. The Order ruled and watched it just as a spider stretches out over its net and holds all the threads. Hence from that lofty palace, from the grand master and from the white-mantled knights, orders were issued and dispatched by couriers, in all directions, to the nobility holding lands in fief, to town councils, to burgo-masters, to bailiffs, to sheriffs and to the captains of the mercenary soldiers, to execute the mandates which originated and were determined upon; and hundreds, yea thousands, were eager to execute them with an iron hand. Hither money flowed from the whole country; hither came cereals, and all kinds of food; hither also came tribute from those groaning under the cruel servitude of the secular clergy and under other cloisters, upon whom the eyes of the Order looked with apathy. Finally, from that place the rapacious arm was stretched out over all surrounding countries and peoples.

Numerous Prussians, speaking the Lithuanian tongue, were wiped out from the face of the land. Lithuania felt the iron heel of the Order pressing heavily upon its breast so terribly that with the drawing of every breath blood gushed from its heart. Poland, although a conqueror in the terrible war at Plowca, nevertheless had lost in Lokietek's time its possessions, including Danzig, Tczewa Gniew, and Swiece, upon the left bank of the Vistula. The Order of the Knights of Iland extended as far as Russia. Both orders swept onward like the first tremendous wave of the German sea, which gradually inundated with increasing magnitude the Slavonic territory.

Until the sun of the German Knights of the

Cross suddenly disappeared behind the clouds of the Order's prosperity, Lithuania embraced Christianity from the hands of the Poles, together with the throne of Krakow, which Jagiello possessed by the hands of a foreign princess. By this transaction the Order did not lose even one domain, not even one castle. But it felt that there was another power besides its own and it had lost the motive for which it existed in Prussia.

After the Lithuanians embraced Christianity, nothing remained for it but to return to Palestine and take care of the pilgrims flocking to the Holy City. But to return to Palestine meant to renounce riches, power, sway, cities, land and whole kingdoms. The Order, therefore, became enraged and as furious as a monstrous dragon, whose side is pierced by an arrow.

The Grand Master Konrad feared to risk all on one throw of the dice, and he trembled at the thought of going to war against the great king, the ruler of Poland, Lithuania and the extensive lands of Russia, which Olgierd had wrested from the Tartars, but the majority of the Knights of the Cross leaned toward war; they felt that it was necessary to carry on a war of life and death, while their power was yet untouched, and while the spell of the Order had not been broken, and the whole world would hasten to its assistance, and the thunderbolts of the Pope would not fall upon its nest, its very existence depending not on propagating Christianity, but actually on maintaining paganism.

Meanwhile they accused Jagiello and Lithuania among all nations and courts of insincere and false acceptance of Christianity, representing it as improper so that they might obtain in the course of

one year that which for ages they had been unable to get with the sword. They intrigued against the Poles and against their rulers and knights as against guardians and defenders of paganism. Those accusations, except in Rome, were credited everywhere, with the result that like a huge wave, princes, counts, and knights from the south and west streamed to Malborg. The Order took courage and felt itself strong. Marienburg with its gigantic strongholds and formidable forecastle inspired the people and dazzled them with its might more than ever, so that the whole Order thought itself strong and indestructible forever, and none of the princes and guests, yea none, with the exception of the grand master, not even any of the Knights of the Cross, understood that since the baptism of Lithuania, such a thing had come to pass,—it was as if the flood of the Nogat which protected the formidable fortress of Malborg on one side, should begin silently and inexorably to undermine its walls. None understood that that gigantic body still retained its power, but the soul had fled from it. To one who had recently arrived and looked at that city reared from the mud, “*ex luto*,” Marienburg, upon those walls, bastions, the black cross upon the gates, the structures and the robes, the first thought that would have crossed his mind above all would have been that even the gates of hell could not prevail against this capital of the cross.

A thought something analogous crossed not only the mind of Powala and of Zbyszko, who had been there before, when they looked upon the fortified city, but also the mind of the keenest among them, Zyndram of Maszkowic. And when he looked at that

moment upon the swarms of armed soldiers within the bastions and the gigantic buildings, his face became sombre, and the haughty words which the Knights of the Cross used when they had threatened King Kazimierz involuntarily came to his mind.

“ We are increasing our strength, and if you do not give in, with our swords in our hand we will chase you to the very city of Krakow.”

Meanwhile the *comthur* of the castle led the knights farther on to the middle castle in the building to the east side, where were situated rooms for the Polish guests.



## CHAPTER VII.

MACKO and Zbyszko were clasped in each other's arms for a long while. They had always loved one another, but in their late adventures and misfortunes in common, their love had become more intense. When the old knight first saw his nephew he guessed that Danusia was no more, consequently he made no inquiries after her, but pressed the younger man to his heart, desiring to show him by his strong embrace that he is not altogether left an orphan, and that he had a close living soul who was ready to share his sorrow with him.

After they had shed many tears of sorrow and affliction, they remained in silence for a while. Then Macko asked :

"Did they take her from you again, or did she succumb in your arms?"

"She expired in my arms when we were quite near Spychow," replied the young man.

Then he told him how it had all happened, frequently interrupting his doleful narrative with tears and sighs. Macko attentively listened and also sighed. Finally he again inquired :

"Is Jurand still alive?"

"When I left, Jurand was still alive: but he cannot live long; and I am sure I shall not see him again."

"Would it not have been better for you to remain there?"

"How could I leave you here?"

"A couple of weeks earlier or later is all the same."

But Zbyszko looked at him attentively and said:

"You must have been sick here? You look like Piotrowin."<sup>1</sup>

"Although it is hot outside, yet it is very cold and terribly wet underground, for the reason that the fortress is surrounded by water. I thought that I should melt away like wax. Breathing is also difficult; all this contributed to the re-opening of my wound, which, you know—I assuaged at Bogdaniec with beaver grease."

"I remember," said Zbyszko, "because Jagienka and myself went to catch a beaver. . . . Then, the dog brothers kept you here underground?"

Macko nodded his head and replied:

"I should have fared badly, if it were not a serious affair, because there is much hatred against Witold and the Zmudzians, and more still against those among us who assist them. In vain I explained to them why we went to Zmudz. They would have already cut off my head; the reason for their not having done so is because of the ransom, and as you well know, money is more desirable to them than revenge. On the other hand, they want to show the world that the king sends Poles to the assistance of the pagans. That the poor Zmudzians ask Christianity, *baptism*, but not from their hands, we know, because we were among them; but the Knights of the Cross give it out that they are not aware of it, and accuse them and our king in every court."

Then Macko's breath gave out so that he was

<sup>1</sup> Like one risen from the dead.

unable to speak, and after taking breath again he continued :

“ I might have succumbed in prison, but Arnold von Baden, who is concerned in the ransom, stood up for me. But he has no influence whatever among the Knights of the Cross, who nicknamed him the Bear. Fortunately, de Lorche heard of me through Arnold and he quarreled with them bitterly. I do not know whether he told you about it, as he likes to hide his good actions. He is of some importance here, because a certain de Lorche once occupied an elevated position in the Order, and this one is a scion of that eminent family, and wealthy. He told them therefore, that he was himself our prisoner, and that if they should take my life, or if I died from want of food or dampness, then you would cut his throat. He threatened the Chapter, that he would tell in all the western courts of the conduct of the Knights of the Cross toward a belted knight. They were scared and put me in the hospital where the air and food are better.”

“ I will not take even one *grzywnien* from de Lorche, so help me God !”

“ I like to take from an enemy, but not from a friend,” said Macko, “ and now I am informed that they have agreed with the king to exchange prisoners ; you will therefore pay nothing for me.”

“ Bah ! What about our knightly word ?” asked Zbyszko. “ An agreement is an agreement, and Arnold may lay infamy upon us.”

Then Macko felt uneasy ; he reflected for a while and said :

“ But one might bargain with him.”

“ We set the price ourselves. Are we worth less now ?”

Macko was much more depressed, but his eyes expressed something akin to admiration and a greater love for Zbyszko.

"How he guards his honor! It is innate with him," he murmured to himself.

Then he sighed. Zbyszko thought that he was sighing for the *grzywiens* which they were to pay to von Baden. He therefore said:

"You know that we have plenty of money and it would be lucky if it were not so heavy."

"God will change it," said the old knight with emotion. "I shall not be much longer in this world."

"Pray do not say that, you will be well again as soon as you feel the wind blowing upon you!"

"Wind? The wind bends the young tree, but breaks the old!"

"Bah! Your bones are still sound and you are yet far from old age. Do not fret."

"I would smile if you were happy. However, I have another reason for my sorrow, to tell the truth, not only I, but all of us."

"What is it?" inquired Zbyszko.

"Do you recollect what I scolded you about when we were in camp with Skirwoillo because you praised the power of the Knights of the Cross? In the field our nation is hardy enough; now I have had an opportunity closely to observe the dog brothers."

Then, as though afraid to speak aloud lest some one might hear him, he lowered his voice:

"I see now that you were right, and not I. May God's hand protect us. What strength, what power! Our knights' hands are itching; they desire to go against the Germans as soon as possible,

but they do not know that all nations and kingdoms will come to assist them, that they have more money, that their discipline is better, that the castles are better fortified, and that their war implements are more excellent. May God's hand protect us! In our country as well as here, they speak of a great war which must take place, and it will; but if it does come to pass, then may God have mercy upon our king, and our nation!"

Then he supported his grizzled head with both hands, resting his elbows upon his knees, and became silent.

Then Zbyszko said,

"You see, in single combat, we have more than one who is stronger than any they have; but as to a great war you have observed yourself."

"Ay! I have observed, God grant that the king's envoys may observe it too, and especially the knight of Maszkowic."

"I saw how gloomy he became. They say there is not a greater leader in war than he is."

"If so, then war might be avoided."

"But if the Knights of the Cross see that they are stronger than we, war is sure to come, and I tell you candidly, by all means let it come quickly, for we cannot continue to live in jeopardy."

Zbyszko bowed his head in grief for his own and the general misfortunes, and Macko said:

"Alas for the noble kingdom, I am afraid that He will chastise us for our too great boldness. Do you remember the Polish knights, in front of the Cathedral at the Wawel, it was before mass when they were about to behead you, they even challenged Tamerlane who is the ruler over forty kingdoms, and who formed a hill out of human

skulls. . . . The Knights of the Cross are not enough for them, they want to challenge everybody at once—and it may be that God is offended by it.”

That unexpected recollection of the past caused Zbyszko to clutch his hair in distress and he shouted :

“ And who was it that rescued me then from the executioner, if not she ! Oh Jesus ! My Danuska, Oh Jesus ! ”

And he began to tear his hair and to bite his fists trying to control his despairing sobs.

“ Child ! For God’s sake, what are you doing ! Quiet yourself,” cried Macko. “ What will you gain by it ? Restrain yourself, stop ! . . . ”

But Zbyszko could not quiet himself for some time. As Macko was still in poor health he became so weak that he tottered and fell senseless upon the bench. This caused Zbyszko to come to his senses, and he placed his uncle upon the bed and refreshed him with wine which the *comthur* of the castle had sent. He watched over him until the old knight fell asleep.

The following day he awoke late, quite fortified and rested.

“ Well,” said Macko, “ it seems that my time has not yet come. I am of opinion that if I could get enough fresh air I should be able to ride on horse-back.”

“ The envoys will yet remain a few days,” replied Zbyszko. “ They are receiving many petitions in behalf of the prisoners taken by the robbers in Mazowsze or in Wielkopolska, but we can depart whenever you want and find yourself strong enough for the journey.”

Just then Hlawa entered.

"Do you know what the envoys are doing now?" inquired Macko.

"They are visiting the high castle and the church. The *comthur* of the castle himself is guiding them. Then they will go to the grand refectory to dine, where your grace will also be invited by the grand master."

"What have you been doing since morning?"

"I looked at the mercenary infantry whom the captains were drilling, and I compared them with our Bohemian soldiers."

"But, do you remember the Bohemian soldiers?"

"I was a youth when Zych of Zgorzelice captured me, but I remember them well because I was very curious to see such things in my boyhood."

"Well then, what do you think?"

"Nothing. The infantry of the Knights of the Cross are well enough and well drilled, but they are like oxen and our Bohemians are wolves. If there is a war, then your graces will see that oxen do not eat wolves, but that wolves are very fond of oxen."

"True," said Macko, who seemed to know something about it. "Whoever rubs himself against your people retreats as though pricked by a hedgehog."

"One mounted knight counts as ten foot soldiers in battle," said Zbyszko.

"But the Marienburg infantry can be conquered," replied the shield-bearer.

Then the conversation concerning the infantry terminated, and Macko said:

"Listen, Hlawa. When I have eaten and feel a little stronger we will start to-day."

"Whither?" inquired the Bohemian.

"To Spychow in Mazowsze," replied Zbyszko.

"Shall we remain there?"

Then Macko looked at Zbyszko inquiringly, because they had not yet spoken about it. Zbyszko might have made up his mind for his future abode, but he did not wish to make his uncle sad, so he deviated from the point and said:

"You first get well!"

"And then?"

"Then you will return to Bogdaniec. I know how much you like Bogdaniec."

"And you?"

"I too am fond of it."

"I do not tell you not to go to Jurand," said Macko, slowly. "Because in case of his death he ought to be fitly buried, but you mark what I say to you, you are young yet and cannot compare yourself with me in understanding. Spychow is an unlucky place. The good you have met was found somewhere else, but there, nothing but grief, hardship and affliction."

"You are right," said Zbyszko. "But there are Danusia's beloved remains."

Macko fearing another unexpected outburst of grief, said:

"Keep quiet!"

But sadness and grief were depicted upon Zbyszko's face.

"There will be time enough to consider the subject," said Zbyszko; "besides you must take a rest in Plock."

"Your grace, nothing will be wanting to the old knight there," interrupted the Bohemian.

"True!" said Zbyszko. "Do you know that



Jagienka is there? She is a lady in waiting to the Princess Ziemowita. Bah, but you ought to know it, because you took her there yourself. She was at Spychow, and I am surprised that you never told me about it, while we were with Skirwoillo."

"She was not only at Spychow, but if it were not for her Jurand would be still groping his way along the road with his staff, or have died somewhere on the wayside. I brought her to Plock on account of the abbot's estate, and I should not have told you then, even if I had remembered, because you, my poor child, cared then for nothing."

"She loves you much," said Zbyszko. "Thank God that no letters were necessary, but she secured the letters for you from the princess, and through the princess from the envoys of the Knights of the Cross."

"There is not a better girl in the whole world. May God bless her," said Macko.

Their conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Zyndram of Maszkowic and Powala of Taczew. They had heard of Macko's fainting spell and they came to inquire.

"Jesus Christ be praised!" said Zyndram as he crossed the threshold. "How do you feel to-day?"

"May God reward you! Improving slowly. Zbyszko says that if I had more fresh air I should recover entirely."

"Why can this not be? . . . It will! Everything will turn out well," interposed Powala.

"I also had a good rest. Not like your graces, who, I am informed, get up very early."

"First, people from this place called concerning the exchange of prisoners," said Zyndram. "Then we inspected the economical management of the

Knights of the Cross, the forecastle and the other two castles."

"It is a substantial economy, and strong castles," murmured Macko.

"Surely they are very powerful. The church is decorated in the Arabesque style. The Knights of the Cross say that they learned that art from the Saracens in Sicily, and in the halls of the palace are singular sculptures upon pillars, single or in groups. The immense refectory, which is also fortified in a manner seldom seen, is remarkable, as are the formidable walls, which the greatest balls wrought of stone could not harm. It is a pleasure to see them."

Zyndram spoke so cheerfully that Macko looked at him with surprise, and asked :

"Did you see their riches, arrangements, soldiers and guests?"

"He showed us all himself, as it were out of hospitality, but actually to make our hearts sink within us."

"Well, what do you say to it?"

"Well, God grant that when war comes we may chase them back beyond the hills and seas to the place whence they came."

Macko, forgetting at that moment his sickness, jumped to his feet with surprise.

"How so, sir, they say that you possess a keen understanding. . . . I nearly fainted when I looked at their might. For God's sake upon what do you form your opinion?"

Then he turned to his nephew.

"Zbyszko, order that wine which they sent us to be brought here! Please take seats, gentlemen, and speak; no medicine has had such effect upon my ailments as your remarks have."

Zbyszko was also very curious to hear; he put the pitcher of wine with cups upon the table, around which they sat down, and Zyndram of Maszkowic spoke as follows:

"The fortifications are nothing, because that which man makes man's hand is able to destroy. Do you not know, sir, that the walls are made of bricks and lime? You also know what men can do."

"By God's wounds, honey flows from your mouth," exclaimed Macko.

And Zyndram rejoiced to hear that praise, and continued his observations:

"Of the people of this place, one has a brother in fetters, another a son or a relation, or some one else in our power. The *comthurs* upon the frontier will incite them to fall upon us, so that many of them will succumb, and many a one will be captured by ours. But the people here have heard that an agreement has taken place between the king and the grand master; they came this morning very early to furnish us with the names of the prisoners, which our clerk has written down. The first was the cooper of this place, a powerful German citizen, possessing a house in Malborg, who finally said, 'I wish I could be of some service to your king. I am ready not only to assist with my possessions, but am willing to lay down my head.' I dismissed him, taking him for a Judas. But later on a lay brother from Oliva arrived; he came to ask for his brother, and he spoke as follows: 'Is it true, sir, that ye are about to declare war against our Prussian lords. You must know that the whole nation, when they pray, "Thy kingdom come," think of your king.' Then there came the petition

for the sons of two noblemen who inhabit the lands along Stum. There came merchants from Danzig; there were mechanics and bell-founders from Kwidzyn. There was quite a crowd of all kinds of people, and all spoke in the same manner."

Then Zyndram stood up, looked around him, and listened at the door to see that nobody was there. Then he said in a whisper:

"I made long inquiries about everything. Throughout the whole of Prussia they hate the Knights of the Cross, the clergy, the nobility and the farmers. And not only this people, who speak our language, hate them, but the very Germans detest them. Those who are obliged to serve, serve. But all would prefer anybody to the Knights of the Cross."

"Bah! but what has this to do with the might of the Knights of the Cross?"

Zyndram put his hand to his brow as if to find some comparison; finally he smiled and asked:

"Have you ever fought in the lists?"

"More than once," replied Macko.

"Then what do you think? Does not a knight fall from his horse at the first encounter, even if he be the most powerful man who has his saddle girths and stirrup straps cut under him?"

"As I live it is so."

"The Order is just such a knight."

"By God!" exclaimed Zbyszko, "you cannot read better things than this in a book."

Macko was much moved, and murmured in a trembling voice:

"God reward you, sir. You have such a large head that you will never find a helmet-maker to fit you; a ready-made helmet will never do."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

Macko and Zbyszko had promised each other to leave Malborg at once. But owing to the encouragement they had received from Zyndram of Maszkowic they did not go. There was a dinner given at the high castle, and afterward a supper, given in the honor of the guests to which Zbyszko, being one of the king's knights, was invited, and Macko was also invited on Zbyszko's account. The dinner was given to the smaller company in the splendid spacious refectory, which was lighted by ten windows, and the vaults of which rested upon only one pillar, a very rare feature in architectural art. The only guests besides the royal knights at the table were two foreign counts, one Swabian and one Burgundian, who, though subjects of rich potentates, had come in their names to borrow money from the Order. Of the citizens, besides the grand master, were four dignitaries called the pillars of the Order, taking part at the dinner. These were the grand *comthur*, the almoner of the Order, the master of the robes, and the treasurer. The fifth pillar, the marshal, was at that time on the expedition against Witold.

Although the Order took the vows of poverty, nevertheless they were served in gold and silver plate, and drank malmaison, because the grand master wanted to dazzle the eyes of the Polish envoys. But in spite of the great number of meats and sweets the guests were somewhat disgusted with the dinner, which was owing to the scanty

conversation and remarks which all were obliged to observe.

But this restraint was absent at the supper which was given in the immense refectory of the Order: (convents Remter). On account of the great gathering of all members of the "convent" and all guests who had not yet succeeded in joining the marshal's army against Witold, there was great joviality. This hilarity did not evoke any dispute or altercation. Indeed, the foreign knights who foresaw that they might chance in the future to meet Polish knights, eyed them askance. But the Knights of the Cross had warned them beforehand to be peaceful, and specially begged them to observe amity, because they feared to offend the royal envoys lest they should offend the king himself and the whole realm. But even in that event the unfriendliness of the Order was shown, because they warned the guests against the furious Poles thus: "That they would not hesitate to pull by the beard or stick a knife into one for any sharp word." But the guests were not a little surprised when they beheld the kind behavior of Powala of Taczew and Zyndram of Maszkowic, and they were not slow to remark that the Poles were not rude, but that the tongues of the Knights of the Cross were malignant and venomous.

Some of them who were accustomed to the quaint amusements at the western courts could not generally comprehend the customs of the Knights of the Cross, because there were present at that banquet a very noisy band of music, coarse songs by the jongleurs, uncouth fun by the mountebanks, dancing bears and barefooted girls. But when they were surprised to see women at the high castle, it



was explained that the prohibition was broken long ago, that even the great Winrych Kniprode himself had once danced with the beautiful Marya von Alfeben. The brethren explained to them, that women were only forbidden to live in the castle, but they were allowed to come to the banquets at the refectory. And that in the previous year the Princess Witoldowa, who lived in the prepared royal apartments in the old guardhouse at the forecastle, had come here to play every day at the golden arcabs which they presented to her every night.

They also played that evening not only at arcabs and chess but also dice. There was even more of that than of conversation, which was drowned by the din of the songs and the noisy music of the band. Nevertheless, in the midst of the buzz and bustle sometimes silence reigned for a while. In taking advantage of one of these moments, Zyndram of Maszkowic, apparently ignorant of the fact, asked the grand master whether the subjects of all countries were very fond of the Order.

To that question, Konrad von Jungingen replied:

“Whoever loves the Cross must also love the Order.”

This reply pleased both the Order and the guests. They began to praise him for it, and he was gratified and continued:

“Whoever is friendly to us fares well under us. But he who is our enemy we have against such a one two means.”

“What are they?” inquired the Polish knight.

“Your honor perchance does not know that I have access from my room to this refectory by

means of a small staircase in the wall, and in front of those stairs is a certain vaulted room to which if I led your honor you would recognize the first of the means."

"As we live!" exclaimed the brothers.

The lord of Maszkowic conjectured that the grand master was speaking of those towers filled with gold of which the Knights of the Cross boasted, he therefore paused a moment and then replied:

"Once upon a time, ah! very long ago, a certain German emperor showed our ambassador, whose name was Skarbek, a similar chamber, and said, 'I have here something with which I can kill your master!' Then Skarbek threw him a precious ring, and said: 'Gold to gold. We Poles are very fond of iron,' and does your honor know what happened afterward? After that was Hundsfield. . . ."

"Who was Hundsfield?" asked a dozen Knights of the Cross together.

"That," replied Zyndram, quietly, "was a certain field on which they could not bury enough Germans, and finally they buried dogs."

Then the brothers and the Knights of the Cross were very much abashed at that reply, and they did not know what to say to it, but Zyndram said:

"You cannot subdue iron with gold."

"Bah!" exclaimed the grand master, "we have yet another means,—iron. Did your grace observe at the forecastle the armor factories, where the hammers work day and night producing the best coats of mail and swords in the world?"

In reply, Powala of Taczew reached with his hand to the middle of the table and took a knife, one ell long and more than half a span wide, with

which they cut meat, and rolled it up as one would a strip of parchment, and lifted it up so that everybody might see it; then he handed it to the grand master.

"If your swords are made of such iron then you will make a poor show!"

Then, contented with himself he smiled, and the clergy and lay brothers got up and in a body hastened to the grand master. Then they passed to each other the scroll which Powala had rolled up from the knife, but all were silent; their hearts quaked with fear at the sight of such strength.

"By the head of St. Liborius!" exclaimed the grand master. "You have, sir, an iron hand."

"And of better stuff than that iron. He twisted that carving knife as though it were made of wax," said the count from Burgundy.

"He did not even redden, neither were his veins swollen," cried one of the brothers.

"Because," replied Powala, "our people are simple and do not know of such wealth and comfort as I see here; but they are hale and powerful."

Then the French and Italian knights approached him, and they began to talk to him in their sonorous tongues, of which old Macko spoke, that it sounded like the clatter of pewter plates. They admired his strength, and he clinked his glasses with theirs and said:

"We see this frequently done at the banquets in our country, and it happens that a girl can roll up a small knife."

But the Germans, who were accustomed to boast in the presence of strangers of their size and strength, were ashamed and angry, so that old Helfenstein began to call to those at the table:

“ This is a disgrace to us ! Brother Arnold von Baden, show them that our bones are not made of church candles. Hand him a carving knife.”

A servant at once brought a knife and placed it in front of Arnold. But, be it owing to confusion because of so many onlookers, or that his fingers were not as strong as Powala's, he only succeeded in bending the knife in two, but was unable to roll it.

Then more than one of the foreign guests to whom the Knights of the Cross had frequently intimated in whispers, that there would be war against King Jagiello next winter, bethought themselves that there would be a very severe winter in that country, and that it would be advisable to return while there was yet time, under a milder sky, to their native castles.

It was somewhat strange that such a thought should cross their minds in the month of July, at a time when the weather is fine and very warm.

## CHAPTER IX.

ZBYSZKO and Macko found nobody at the court in Plock; because both princes with their eight children had left on a visit to Czersk, whither the Princess Anna Danuta had invited them. They got information about Jagienka from the bishop: she had to remain at Spychow with Jurand until his death. The information suited them, as without that they had intended to go to Spychow themselves. Macko greatly praised Jagienka for preferring to stay with the dying Jurand, who was not even her relative, rather than enjoy the pleasures of the court at Czersk.

"It is possible," said the old knight, "that she did so purposely in order not to miss us. I have not seen her for a long while, and should be glad to meet her, for I know she too wishes me well. The girl must have grown since, and I am sure that she must be better looking now than she was then."

"She has changed very much," said Zbyszko. "She was always handsome, and I remember her when she was only a country lass, but now she is fit for the royal drawing-room."

"Does she seem to have changed so much? Bah! Those Jastrzembcows of Zgorzelice belong to an old stock, who called themselves in time of war 'Na gody,' (to the feast)."

Silence reigned for a moment, then the old knight continued:

"It will surely happen as I told you; she will be pleased to go to Zgorzelice."

"I was surprised at her leaving it."

"But the abbot's property? Then there were Cztan and Wilk whom she feared, and I advised her myself that her brother would be safer by himself than with her."

"Faith. They would scarcely attack an orphan!"

Macko pondered.

"But they may have revenged themselves for my having taken her away, and God only knows if even one tree is left in Bogdaniec. I also do not know whether, upon my return, I shall be able to defend myself against them. They are young and strong fellows, but I am an old man."

"Ay! Tell that to one who does not know you," replied Zbyszko.

In fact Macko was not entirely in earnest, for he was concerned about quite another matter and he therefore waved his hand.

"If I had not been taken sick at Malborg," he said, "I should have yet— But we will speak about it in Spsychow."

They remained over night in Plock, and in the morning they started for Spsychow.

The days were bright and the roads dry, smooth, and safe; for, owing to the late agreement, the Knights of the Cross checked the bandits upon the frontier. Even without that no bandit would dare to approach two such experienced knights. Therefore they journeyed rapidly, and early in the morning on the fifth day after they left Plock they found themselves, without any trouble, at Spsychow. Jagienka who regarded Macko as her dearest friend in the world, greeted him almost as if he were her father, and he, though not given to emo-

tion, was nevertheless moved to tears at the welcome of the beloved girl; when a moment later, Zbyszko had made inquiries after Jurand, he went out to him and to his beloved remains; the old knight sighed deeply and said:

"Well! Whom God wanted to take he has taken, and whom he wished to leave, he has left. But I think that now our troubles and our wanderings in pathless wildernesses have at last come to an end!"

Then he added:

"Hej! Where has not the Lord Jesus led us during the last few years!"

"But God's hand tended you," said Jagienka.

"True, it tended us; nevertheless, I tell you candidly, it is time to be at home."

"We must remain here as long as Jurand is alive," said Jagienka.

"How is he?"

"He looks upward and smiles. It seems that he is already beholding Paradise, and in it Danuska."

"Do you watch over him?"

"I do. But Father Kaleb says that the angels guard him. Yesterday the housekeeper saw two of them."

"They say," said Macko, "that the most fitting end for a nobleman is to die on the battlefield. But to die in bed as Jurand is doing is good enough."

"He neither eats nor drinks, but constantly smiles," said Jagienka.

"Let us go to him, Zbyszko must also be there."

But Zbyszko only remained a short while with Jurand, who recognized nobody, then he went into the vault to Danusia's coffin, where he remained

until old Tolima found him and reminded him that it was time for refreshment.

Whilst leaving the vault, he observed by the light of the torches, that there were upon the coffin many garlands of star-thistles and other flowers, and the cleanly swept floor around it was strewn with buckwheat, marigolds and blossoms of the lindentree, which exhaled a sweet perfume. Zbyszko was overcome on seeing it and inquired :

“ Who adorns this tomb ? ”

“ The young lady from Zgorzelice, ” replied Tolima.

The young knight said nothing, but a moment later when he saw Jagienka he suddenly knelt at her feet, and embracing them he exclaimed :

“ May God reward you for your goodness and for those flowers for Danuska ! ”

Then he burst into tears and Jagienka clasped his head in her hands as a sister who yearns to press her wailing little brother to her breast, and said :

“ Oh, my Zbyszko, I should dearly like to comfort you ! ”

Then copious tears flowed down her cheeks also.



## CHAPTER X.

JURAND died a few days later. Father Kaleb performed divine service over his remains for a whole week, during which time corruption did not set in. This was considered by all as a divine miracle. Spychow was swarming with visitors for a whole week. Then, as it is usual after a funeral, the town became quiet.

Zbyszko went often into the vault and sometimes, with his crossbow, to the woods; he did not go there to kill any beast, but for distraction. When on a certain evening he came home and found Jagienka sitting with Macko and Hlawa, he said unexpectedly :

“ Listen to what I am going to say. Grieving does nobody any good, therefore it is better that you should return to Bogdaniec and Zgorzelice than remain here in sorrow.”

Silence reigned because all guessed that it would be a serious and important conversation.

After a while Macko replied :

“ It will be better for us, but it will also be better for you.”

But Zbyszko shook his head.

“ No !” he said. “ I shall return, God grant, to Bogdaniec, but now my way is in another direction.”

“ Hey !” cried Macko, “ I said that there was an end and there is no end. Fear God, Zbyszko !”

“ But you must know that I have vowed.”

“ Then that is the reason ? Danuska is no more,

and so is the vow. Death has freed you from your oath."

"My death might absolve me, but not hers. I have sworn to God upon my knightly honor. What more do you want? Upon my knightly honor!"

Every word concerning knightly honor influenced Macko like magic. In all his life, with the exception of God's commandments and those of the church, he had paid little attention to any other words—but he now seemed to be unmoved by Zbyszko's words.

"I do not tell you to break your oath," he said.

"Then what?"

"I tell you that you are young, and that you have time enough for everything. Come along now with us, and take a rest."

"Then, I tell you as sincerely as I tell it at confession," replied Zbyszko, "I shall go where I must, I talk to you, eat and drink as all men do. But I speak the truth that I am absolutely undone. In my heart here is nothing but sorrow; nothing but pain; nothing but streams of bitter tears flowing from my eyes."

"But it will be worse when you are among strangers."

"No," said Zbyszko. "God knows that I should dwindle away in Bogdaniec. When I tell you, I cannot, then I cannot! I want war, because in the field one forgets more easily. I feel that when I have executed my vow, when I am able to tell that departed soul, 'I have fulfilled everything I promised you, now let me go;' and first—no! You will not keep me in Bogdaniec, even when I return."

At these words such deep silence prevailed that one could hear the buzzing of the flies under the ceiling.

"If he would only dwindle away in Bogdaniec, then it would be better for him to go," finally said Jagienka.

Macko placed both hands around his neck as he was accustomed to do when he was worried. Then he sighed heavily and said :

"Ay, mighty God! . . ."

But Jagienka continued :

"Zbyszku, but swear that if the Almighty preserves you, you will not stay here but return to us."

"Why should I not return? I cannot avoid Spychow, but I shall not remain here."

"Because," continued Jagienka in a low tone. "If the beloved remains are the reason, then we will transfer them to Krzesni."

"O Jagus!" exclaimed Zbyszko with an outburst, and at the first moment of transport and thankfulness, he fell at her feet.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE old knight longed to accompany Zbyszko to the army of Prince Witold, but he would not even listen to it. He insisted upon going there alone, without post and without wagons, with only three horsemen, one to carry provisions, another arms, and the third bearskins to sleep upon. In vain Macko and Jagienka prayed that he would at least take Hlawa with him, as a faithful and experienced armor-bearer, but he refused other companions, saying that it was necessary for him to forget his sorrow, and that the very presence of the armor-bearer would bring to his mind all that had happened to him in the past.

But before leaving there was yet some important business to settle; namely, what should be done with Spychow. Macko advised the sale of that estate. He gave as his reason, that it was an unlucky place which brought nothing to anybody besides misfortune and sorrow. But there were in Spychow all sorts of riches; besides money, there were arms, horses' apparel, fur coats, costly skins and furniture and herds of cattle. Macko was greatly concerned about those things so that the wealth of Spychow might benefit Bogdaniec, for which he cared more than all his other lands. Consequently they deliberated upon it for a long while. But Zbyszko would not consent to any measure which tended to the sale of the estate.

“How could I consent to the sale of Jurand's

bones? Is that the way for me to repay him for the kindnesses with which he loaded me?"

"We have promised you to take with us Danusia's remains," said Macko. "We can also remove Jurand's body."

"Bah, his body is here with his ancestors, he will feel lonely at Krzesni. If you take away Danusia then he will be far from his child, and if you take him, then his ancestors remain alone."

"But you do not see that Jurand, who is in paradise, daily sees them all, and Father Kaleb says that he is in Paradise," replied the old man.

But Father Kaleb, who was on Zbyszko's side, said:

"The soul is in Paradise, but the body is in the ground until judgment day."

Macko stopped for a moment and then continued the trend of his thoughts.

"Certainly, Jurand cannot see them unless he be saved. However, there is no help for that."

"Why scrutinize God's decrees here," replied Zbyszko. "But God forbid that a stranger should live here with these saintly ashes. I prefer to leave all here than to sell Spsychow, even if they should give me a principality in exchange."

After those words Macko saw that there was no help for it, because he knew his nephew's stubbornness, but he loved him dearly in spite of his idiosyncrasies.

Presently he said:

"It is true that the boy speaks to me against the grain, but in this particular he is right." And Macko was much troubled, for he did not know what to do.

But Jagienka who had been listening quietly up to that time, came forward with new advice.

“ If one could find an honest man who could administer here, or a tenant to take Spychow, that would be an excellent thing. He would properly let out the lands, and you would have no trouble but receive the cash. Would not Tolima do? . . . He is an old man and is better adapted for war than for husbandry ; but if not him, then perhaps Father Kaleb? ”

“ Kind lady ! ” said Father Kaleb, “ both Tolima and myself can look after the lands, but we are not fit to take charge of them. ”

Then he turned toward Tolima.

“ Am I right old man ? ”

Then Tolima put his hand to his sharp-pointed ear and asked what was the matter ; but when they repeated it to him loudly, he said :

“ It is the sacred truth. I am not for husbandry ! I prefer the axe to the plough. . . . I should be delighted if I could yet avenge the lady and child. . . . ”

Then he stretched his lean, but sinewy hand, the fingers of which looked like the talons of a bird of prey, and, turning his grey wolf-like head toward Macko and Zbyszko, he added :

“ Your graces, take me with you against the Germans, that is my service ! ”

And he was right. He had increased Jurand's riches considerably, but only by means of war and spoil, and not by husbandry.

Then Jagienka, who was meanwhile making up her mind what to say, spoke :

“ A young and fearless man would be preferable to take care of the estate, considering that the

wall of the Knights of the Cross is opposite. I speak of one who would not only not hide himself from the Germans, but look for them. I am therefore of opinion to try Hlawa—who I think is fit for it.”

“Just see how well she advises!” said Macko, for in spite of his profound attachment to Jagienka, he would not, in such important matters, bother his head to listen to the advice of a woman, especially of a girl.

But the Bohemian stood up and said:

“God is my witness that I would be most happy to accompany my master Zbyszko to the war, for we have together already skinned a few Germans, and that would happen again. . . . But if I have to remain here I shall stay. . . . Tolima is my friend and he knows me. The wall of the Knights of the Cross is opposite, but what of it? That is just the very thing! And we shall see which of the neighbors will first be disgusted! Instead of my fearing them, they will fear me. God forbid that I should wrong you in the administration and look only for my own interest. The young lady can testify to the truth, that I would rather be cut to pieces a hundred times than gaze at her with dishonest eyes. . . . I understand as much of husbandry as I have learned at Zgorzelice, but I guess that there is more work to be done here with axe and sword than with the plough. That is the main thing which occupies my mind. But, however, let it be so. . . . I must stay here. . . .”

“What are you driving at?” inquired Zbyszko.

“Why are you reluctant to stay here?”

Hlawa was much confused and stutteringly continued:

"When the young lady leaves, then everybody will go with her. I shall fight well—and attend to husbandry too—but all alone . . . without any assistance. . . . I shall feel very lonely without the young lady and without . . . I want to say just now . . . and as the young lady does not travel alone . . . so there will be nobody here to help you. . . . I do not know! . . ."

"Of what is that boy talking?" asked Macko.

"You have a keen understanding, but you failed to guess what he was after," replied Jagienka.

"What is it then?"

But Jagienka, instead of replying, turned toward Hlawa.

"Will you be able to bear it, if Anula Sieciechowa remains with you?"

Then the Bohemian fell at her feet with such force that the dust rose from the floor.

"I would bear it with her even in Hades," he exclaimed, embracing her feet.

When Zbyszko heard that exclamation, he looked in astonishment at his armor-bearer, because he had not the slightest knowledge of the affair.

Macko also was greatly surprised and thought how great a part women take in all human transactions, and how all things can also be accomplished or frustrated by women.

"Thank God," he murmured, "that I am no more longing after them."

However, Jagienka turned again to Hlawa and said:

"We must now ascertain whether Anula is also willing to bear with you."

Then she called Sieciechowa, and she entered, knowing or having guessed what it was all for.



When she came in, she had her hand raised, shading her eyes, and only a part of her bright hair was visible which gleamed brightly under the rays of the sun falling upon it. At first she remained near the door, then she hastened to Jagienka, fell upon her knees in front of her and hid her face in the folds of her skirt.

Then the Bohemian also knelt near her and said to Jagienka :

“ Bless us, young lady ! ”

## CHAPTER XII.

THE following morning the moment of Zbyszko's departure arrived. He was upon a huge war horse, and his men surrounded him. Jagienka stood near the stirrups with her sad sky-blue eyes silently raised toward the young knight, as if wishing to satiate her eyes with him before his departure. Macko and the priest were at the other stirrup, and quite close to them were Hlawa with Sieciechowa. Zbyszko alternately turned his head, now to one side then to the other, exchanging with them the few words one is wont to say before undertaking a long journey: "Be in good health," "Good-bye," "May God guide you," "Time to start!" "Hey! time, time!"

He had taken leave of Jagienka whose feet he had embraced, thanking her for her good wishes. But now whilst looking down upon her from his elevated seat in the knightly saddle, he wished expressly to say a few more good words, because her raised eyes and face distinctly spoke the word "Return!" and his heart was filled with sincere gratitude.

And as if replying to her dumb appeal, he said:

"Jagus, I feel toward you as to a sister. . . . You know . . . I shall say no more."

"I know; God reward you!"

"Remember my uncle."

"You also remember."

"I shall return if I do not perish."

"Do not perish."

She had used the same expression once before when Zbyszko had told her in Plock of the expedition. But her words on this occasion were spoken with more feeling, and it may be that for the reason of hiding her tears she so bent her head that her brow, for a moment, touched Zbyszko's knee.

Meanwhile the three horsemen at the gate, holding their pack-horses ready for the journey, began to sing :

“The ring will not be lost ;  
The golden ring will not be lost :  
The crow will bring it ;—  
From the field it will bring it  
To the maiden.”

“Forward !” commanded Zbyszko.

“May God guide you. O, most Holy Mother ! . . .”

The clattering of the horses' hoofs upon the wooden bridge was audible. One of the horses neighed continually, the others snorted loudly, and the retinue moved forward.

But Jagienka, Macko, the priest, and Tolima, as well as the Bohemian, with his beloved, and the servants who remained at Spsychow, went out upon the bridge and looked at the departing travelers. Father Kaleb blessed them with the cross for a long while until they disappeared behind the high alder-trees, then he said: “By that sign no evil adventure will befall them.”

And Macko added :

“Surely, but that too is a good sign : that the horses snorted loudly.”

\* \* \* \* \*

But they did not remain long in Spsychow. In

about a fortnight the old knight had arranged affairs with the Bohemian, whom he appointed tenant of Spychow. But himself, at the head of a long line of wagons, surrounded by armed men, moved with Jagienka toward Bogdaniec. Not altogether contented were the looks of Father Kaleb and Tolima.

Truly speaking, Macko had somewhat stripped Spychow. But because Zbyszko had given him the entire management, nobody dared to interfere. Were it not for Jagienka who interfered, taunted with what he called "woman's understanding," he would have even taken more, but nevertheless he paid attention to her words in everything.

Danusia's coffin they did not take; since Spychow was not sold, they considered it wise to follow Zbyszko's wishes and leave the remains with her ancestors. Instead of that they carried with them a large amount of money, and much wealth which Jurand had taken from the Germans whom he had conquered in various battles. When Macko now looked upon the mat-covered laden wagons he rejoiced in his heart at the thought that now he would be enabled to put Bogdaniec in a proper condition. But his joy was poisoned by his only fear, that Zbyszko might succumb in the field. But as he knew the knightly dexterity of his young nephew, he lost no hope of his happy return, and in the happiness of the moment he reflected:

"Perhaps it is God's will," he said to himself, "that Zbyszko should first receive Spychow, then Moczydoly, and then all that was left by the abbot? Let him only safely return, then I will build for him an excellent castle at Bogdaniec. Then we shall see! . . ."

Then he recollected that Wilk of Brzozowa and Cztań of Rogowa would inevitably intercept him and perhaps he would have to fight them. But it did not frighten him any more than an old war horse is afraid when he goes into battle. His health was restored; he felt his strength in his bones. He knew that those cutthroats were threatening indeed, but he also knew that they possessed no knightly discipline whatsoever, and it would be an easy matter to overcome them. It is true that he recently had presented the affair to Zbyszko in a different light, but he had done it to influence him to return home.

"Hey! I am a pike and they are only minnows," he thought. "They had better leave me alone!"

But something else caused him to feel uneasy. God knows when Zbyszko would return; meanwhile he only considered Jagienka as his sister, and she looked upon him as a brother, and she might not want now to wait for his uncertain return.

Then he turned to her and said:

"Listen, Jagna, I did not speak of Cztań and Wilk, because they are common boors. You are now a lady of the court! Some years ago, your deceased father spoke about it that you already felt God's will, and that was years ago. Because I know, he said, that a maiden whose garland presses heavily upon her head will look out herself for some one who will take it off. . . . It stands to reason that neither Cztań nor Wilk. . . . But what do you think?"

"What are you asking me?"

"Will you give yourself away to any one?"

“ I ? I shall remain a nun ! ”

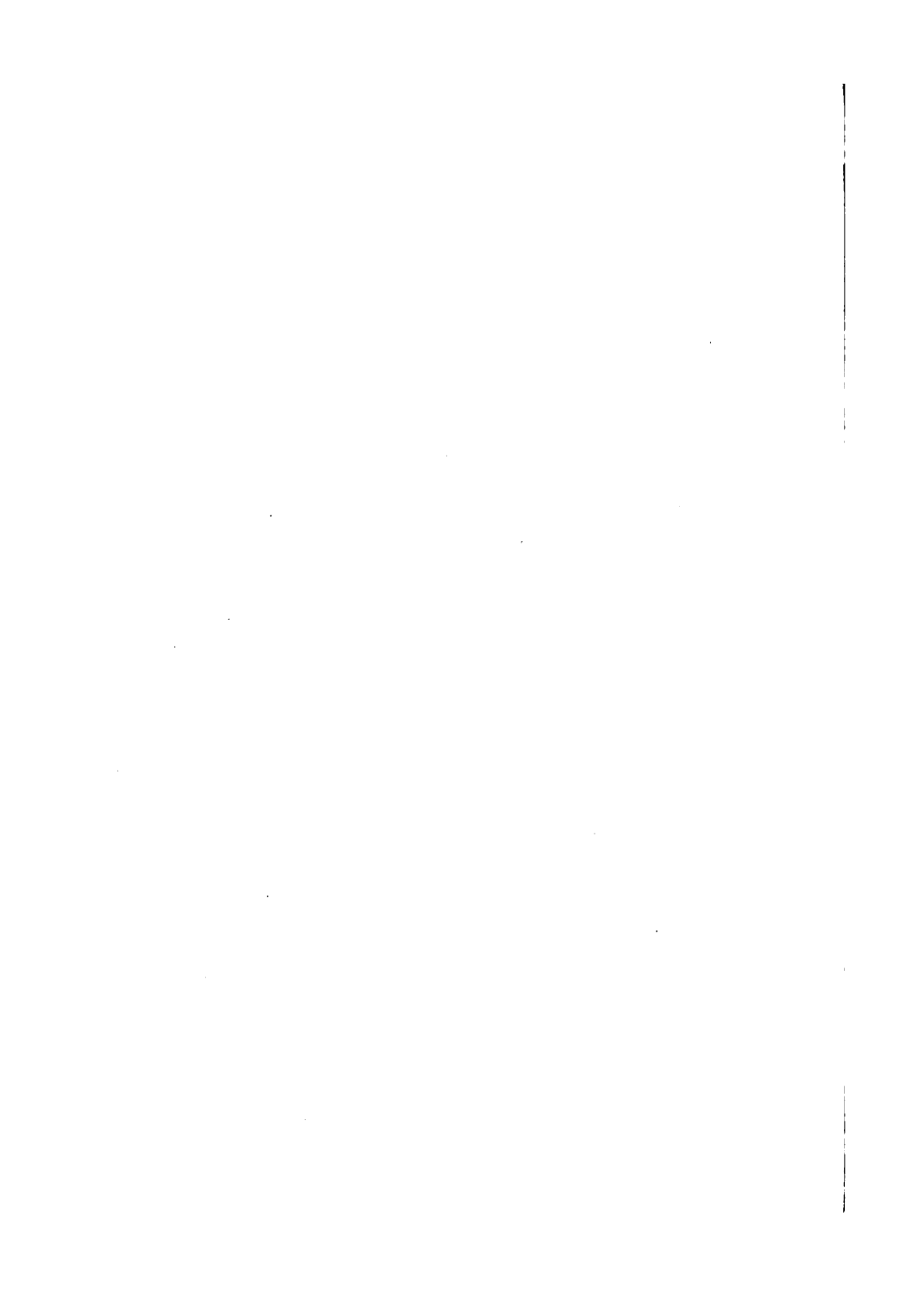
“ Do not say that irrevocably. What if Zbyszko returns ? ”

But she shook her head and said, “ I shall become a nun. ”

“ Well. But if he falls in love with you, and begs you much ? ”

At that Jagienka blushed and turned her head toward the field. But the wind which was just blowing from that direction, wafted to Macko her whispered reply :

“ Then I shall not become a nun. ”



**PART TENTH.**





## CHAPTER I.

THEY tarried awhile in Plock for the purpose of getting clear information concerning the abbot's testament, and to gain an insight of the documents; then they proceeded without stopping. The heat having dried the mud and narrowed the streams the road was safe and easy and led through a peaceful and hospitable people of their own. From Sieradz, careful Macko despatched a messenger to Zgorzelice to inform them of Jagienka's and his own coming; in consequence of that precaution, Jasko, Jagienka's brother, at the head of armed farm hands, hastened to meet them midway and lead them home.

There was great rejoicing, shouting and exultation at their meeting. Jasko and Jagienka resembled one another as two drops of water, but he had outstripped her in growth. The youngster was brisk and jovial like his father Zych, from whom he had inherited the desire for constant singing. He was lively as a spark. He also considered himself a full grown strong man, for he commanded his men like a leader, and they fulfilled his orders in the twinkling of an eye, apparently fearing his authority and his will.

Consequently Macko and Jagienka wondered at the change; while Jasko was no less surprised and greatly rejoiced at the growth and courtly manners of his sister, whom he had not seen for a long time. He had told them that he was about to start to see her before he received the message of her coming, and had they tarried a little on the road

they would not have met him at home; because the time had arrived when it was necessary for him to see the world, he said, to come in contact with people, gain knightly instruction, and find means, here and there, to fight knight errants.

"To see the world and know the manners of the people is a good thing, because it instructs men how to act and what to say in all circumstances," said Macko, "and it strengthens the natural understanding. But as to fighting knight errants, it is better that I should tell you rather than any foreign knight you might happen to challenge, that you are too young, and who will not fail to laugh at you."

"He could weep after his laughter, or, if not he, his wife and children."

Then he looked in front of him with such excessive pride as if he were challenging all knight errants in the world, wishing to tell them: "Get ready to die." But the old knight of Bogdaniec asked:

"Have Cztań and Wilk left you alone? Both were looking after Jagienka."

"Bah! Wilk was killed in Silesia. He had taken a castle by assault, but owing to a block which was thrown upon him from the walls, he gave up the ghost two days later."

"It is a pity! His father also went to fight the Germans in Silesia who oppress our nation, and from whom he took much booty. . . . It is very difficult to take castles, neither arms nor knightly skill are of avail against them. God grant that Prince Witold abstain from attacking castles, but make the Knights of the Cross lick the dust in the open field. . . . And what became of Cztań?"

Jasko smiled :

“Cztan got married. He took a farmer's good-looking daughter from Wysoki Brzeg for a wife. Hey! not only is she a handsome girl but also a helpmate, because Cztan is a quarrelsome fellow and she hits him upon his shaggy snout, and leads him by the nose as a bear is led by the chain.”

The old knight rejoiced to hear it.

“You see! All women are the same; you, too, Jagienka, will be like her! Thank God that I am spared trouble with those two cutthroats. Truly speaking, I am astonished that they left Bogdaniec alone.”

“Cztan wanted to do it, but Wilk, who was more sensible, would not permit him. He came to us at Zgorzelice to inquire after Jagienka. I told him that she had left for the abbot's estate; and he asked: ‘But why did Macko not tell that to me?’ I replied: ‘Is Jagienka your own that you ought to be told?’ He reflected for a while and then said: ‘You are right to say that she is not mine.’ As he was a keen man he evidently tried to make friends with you and us, so that, should Cztan attack Bogdaniec he would oppose him. They did attack each other at Lawica near Piaskow and both were hurt. After that they got drunk as they were accustomed to do.”

“The Lord make His face shine upon Wilk's soul,” said Macko.

Then he sighed deeply; he was glad that he did not find other losses in Bogdaniec which might have been occasioned by his long absence.

Indeed, he found none; on the contrary, the number of the cattle in his herds was greater, and from a small drove of mares he found several two-year-old

foals; some had for their sires the Frisian war stallions, renowned for their extraordinary size and strength. The only loss he found was the escape of some of his slaves, but they were few; they could only escape to Silesia, but there the Germans, or the Germanized robber knights treated their prisoners worse than the Polish nobility did.

He found the old big house considerably dilapidated. The floor was cracked, the ceiling and walls leaning, and the larch-tree beams, cut two hundred or more years before, had begun to rot.

All the apartments which were once occupied by the numerous Gradys of Bogdaniec, leaked during the abundant rains in the summer season. The roofs became full of holes, and covered over with tufts of green and red mosses. The whole building had settled and had the appearance of a spreading but rotten mushroom.

"If the old man had been here the houses might have endured, because the decay is of recent date," said Macko to the old field-inspector Kondrat, who had superintended the estate during the owner's absence.

Then he added:

"I could live here, even as it is, all the days of my life. But Zbyszko looks for a castle."

"For God's sake! Did you say a castle?"

"Eh! What then?"

It was the favorite thought of Macko to erect a castle for Zbyszko and his future offspring. He knew that a nobleman who did not live in the usual manor house but beyond the moat, with a watch house from which the watchman can view the whole surroundings, together with those of the neighbors, counted for something. Macko wanted little for him-

self, but for Zbyszko and his children he would not be satisfied with little, especially now when the estate had increased to such great proportions.

"If I only were to take Jagienka," he thought, "and with her Moczydoly and the abbot's estate, there would be none in the vicinity equal to us. May God grant it so!"

But all that depended upon Zbyszko's return. "But that is an uncertain thing and depends upon God's will," said Macko to himself, "it is necessary for me to be on the best of terms with the Lord God. Not only to keep from offending Him in the least, but to make Him be pleased." With this object he largely contributed to the church at Krzesnia, wax for candles, and game; and on a certain evening when on a visit to Zgorzelice, he said to Jagienka:

"I am going to Krakow to-morrow to the tomb of our saintly Queen Jadwiga."

She started from her seat for fear.

"Have you heard any bad news?"

"No news whatever, I do not expect any so soon; but you remember that when I was sick, suffering from the wound in my side, (which you must well remember, when you and Zbyszko went to get a beaver) I then vowed that if God restored my health, I would go to the queen's tomb. All praised then my vows. Surely God has there many saintly servants, but they are not as important, (and there are so many of them), as Jadwiga whom I do not wish to offend, for it concerns Zbyszko and myself."

"True! as I live," said Jagienka.

"But you have just returned from such a terrible journey. . . ."

"What of it! I prefer to execute everything at once, and then rest quietly at home until Zbyszko's return. Only let our queen intercede in his behalf with the Lord Jesus, then with his good armor not even ten Germans will be able to withstand him. . . . Then I shall build a castle with better hope."

"But your bones are yet in good conditions."

"Surely! I am still strong. I will tell you something else. Let Jasko who is very anxious to travel come with me. I am an experienced man and can manage to check him; if any accident happens—because he is a youth with itching hands—then you must bear in mind that I am not a novice in combat, on foot or on horseback, either with the sword or with the axe."

"I know that none could protect him better than you can."

"But I think that there will not be much chance of fighting, for as long as the queen lived there were many foreign knights in Krakow who came to see her beauty. But now they prefer to go to Malborg because there they have plenty of big malmaison barrels."

"Bah! There is already a new queen."

And Macko shrugged his shoulders and gesticulated.

"I have seen her! and will say nothing more. Do you understand me?"

Then he added:

"In three or four weeks we shall be back home."

And so it happened. The old knight commanded Jasko to swear by knightly honor and by the head of St. Jerzey that he would not clamor for a longer journey; then they left.

They reached Krakow without any mishap be-

cause the country was quiet, and it was insured from any incursions by the Germanized princelets and robber knights, because they feared the king's forces, as well as the determined bearing of the knights. When they had performed the vows, they were presented at the king's court by Powala of Taczew and the little Prince Jamont. Considering his experience Macko thought that he would be eagerly asked at the court and offices about the Knights of the Cross among whom he had lived and whom he therefore had closely observed. But while he talked with the chancellor and the sword-bearer of Krakow he was astonished to learn that they knew much more of the Knights of the Cross than he did. They knew everything, even to the minutest details of what was going on in Malborg, and in most distant castles at other places. They knew the number of their soldiers and how they were commanded, how many cannon there were, how much time it would take to gather together the army, and what were the plans of the Knights of the Cross in case of war. They even knew the character of every *comthur*, whether he was of a rash and furious disposition, or of a deliberate one; and everything was as carefully written down as though war were going to break out the following morning.

This caused the old knight greatly to rejoice; he understood that they were getting ready for war at Krakow, with far more deliberation, wisdom and power than at Malborg. "God has given to us even greater courage than they have," said Macko to himself, "and surely more wisdom and experience." That was actually so. He also learned whence they received the information. It was fur-



nished by the inhabitants of Prussia, men of all conditions, Poles as well as Germans. The Order had managed to arouse against itself such hatred that all Prussians looked upon the coming of Jagiella's forces as upon a delivery from bondage.

Macko remembered then what Zyndram had told him at Malborg; and he said to himself:

"That man has a big head! a regular tub!"

And he recalled to mind every word Zyndram had said; and on one occasion he even borrowed his clever expressions, that happened when he replied to Jasko's queries about the Knights of the Cross; he said:

"Those scoundrels are very powerful, but what do you think? Even the most powerful knight is thrown from his charger when the straps and saddle girth are cut under him?"

"He will be thrown down, as sure as I stand here," replied the youngster.

"Ha! You see!" he exclaimed, with a thundering voice, "I wanted to bring you to this."

"Then what is it?"

"Because the Order may be compared to just such a knight."

After a while he added:

"You cannot hear such sayings from every mouth; do not fear!"

As the little youthful knight had not yet comprehended the full drift of the comparison, he began to explain to him, but he forgot to add that that comparison was not his own, but proceeded from that great head of Zyndram of Maszkow.

## CHAPTER II.

THEY did not tarry long in Krakow, and would have made a shorter stay still, had it not been for Jasko, who wanted to see the people and the city which seemed a wonderful dream to him. The old knight was anxious to hasten to his estate for the harvest and weeding. Jasko's petitions were of little avail. They therefore reached their home about the feast of the Assumption of our Lady. One at Bogdaniec, and the other at Zgorzelice, with his sister.

From that moment life began to be unexciting. They occupied their time in agricultural pursuits and customary rural exertions. The harvest in the lowlands of Zgorzelice and specially that on Jagienka's own property at Moczydoly turned out excellently; but not so at Bogdaniec; owing to drought the crop was poor and it did not require much labor in gathering. As a whole the lands there were scantily cultivated. The estate was situated near the woods, and owing to the prolonged absence of the owners even those parts which had been cleared up by the ploughmen of the abbot, had been abandoned for want of laborers. The old knight, though sensitive to any losses, did not take it too much to heart, for with money, he thought, everything could be arranged and placed in order, provided there were one for whom he could interest himself and labor. But just that doubt poisoned his labor and days. Indeed he was not idle. He got up with the dawn, drove to the

herds, inspected the rural and forest labor. He had even selected a place in the castle, and prepared lumber. But after the day was over and the scorching sun seemed to be melted into the red and golden rays of dawn, he was very often seized with an intense yearning and with it a kind of restlessness which he had never before experienced. "I exert and trouble myself here," he said to himself, "and my dear boy may be lying somewhere dead, transfixed by a spear, and the wolves making a noise with their teeth over him." Those thoughts oppressed his heart with great pain and pity. Then he watched and listened attentively whether he could hear the tramp of horses that announced the daily visits of Jagienka. Then he would feign and tell her that he had good hopes, and by this means his own distressed heart was somewhat comforted.

But she visited him daily, often in the evening, armed with crossbow and spear at the saddle, against an attack on her returning home.

That she should happen to meet Zbyszko on one of those visits was quite improbable, for Macko did not dare to expect his return before the lapse of a year or eighteen months. But it was obvious that the young lady harbored also that hope in her heart, because she came attired, not as she was accustomed to appear in the past, in her laced bodice and covered with a sheep skin jacket, wool outward, and leaves in her disarranged hair, but she came with her hair beautifully plaited, and her breast covered with fine colored Sieradz cloth. Macko went out to meet her. Her first question usually was, as if some one had written it for her: "What news?"

"Nothing!" was his usual reply. Then he led

her into the house, and they chatted at the hearth about Zbyszko, Lithuania, the Knights of the Cross, and the war, returning to the same subject and nothing but the same. They were never tired, nor had enough of it.

Whole months were spent in that way. Sometimes Macko visited Zgorzelice, but Jagienka often came to him. But at times when the road became unsafe on account of disturbances in the neighborhood, or during the rutting season of the bears when the he-bears are prone to attack, Macko accompanied her to her home. The old man, when well armed, thanks to his extraordinary strength, was not afraid of any wild beast; he was therefore of far greater danger to the beasts than they to him. The two rode stirrup to stirrup. Very often they heard threatening sounds from the depths of the woods, but they paid no attention to them, for nothing could harm them. Their only concern was Zbyszko. Where was he? What was he doing? Perhaps killed, or he would soon kill as many Knights of the Cross as he had vowed to the departed Danusia and her mother. Would he return soon? Jagienka had put that question to Macko a hundred times before, but he replied with such attention and premeditation as though he heard it for the first time.

"Tell me," she inquired, "is a fight in the field less terrible for a knight than the assault upon a castle?"

"See what happened to Wilk. No arms can withstand a beam which is rolled down from the rampart, but in the field if a knight is well practiced he can fight against ten."

"Does Zbyszko possess good armor?"

"He has several good ones; but the best of them are those which he conquered from the Frisians: those were made in Milan. A year ago the armor was too large for Zbyszko, but now they fit him."

"Then such armor is proof against every weapon. Is it true?"

"No, that which is made by man can also be destroyed by man. Armor made in Milan can be destroyed by a sword of Milan, or be pierced by English arrows."

"By English arrows?" inquired Jagienka in alarm.

"Did I not tell you that? There are no better archers in the world than the English are; unless it be the Mazurs of the wilderness. But even they do not possess such arms. The English crossbow pierces the best armor at a distance of a hundred feet. I saw that near Wilno and none of them missed. There are some among them who can shoot a hawk in flight."

"O heathen progeny! How did you succeed with them?"

"There was no other means but to go for them quickly. Those scoundrels are also experts with the battle-axe, but in hand to hand encounters we managed them."

"God's hand protected you then, He will also protect Zbyszko now."

"I say it often: 'The Lord has created us and placed us in Bogdaniec. He will see to it now that we are not wiped out.' Ha, it is God's own affair now. True, it is not a small affair to take care of the whole world and forget nothing, but a man is apt to forget something; he must therefore

bear in his mind : first not to stint the Holy Church, secondly that God's mind is not man's mind."

That was the drift of their frequent conversations when they encouraged each other with hope and confidence. Nevertheless the days, weeks and months passed by. In the fall, occurred Macko's affair against old Wilk of Brzozowa. It was an old dispute between the abbot and the Wilks concerning the forest boundary at Bogdaniec which the abbot held in pledge and which he cleared of trees and seized. At that time the abbot challenged even both Wilks at once, father and son, to a fight, either with spears or with long swords. The Wilks however refused to fight a clergyman. But in court they obtained nothing. Now old Wilk remembered those lands; but Macko who was exceedingly grasping where land was concerned, followed the impulse of his nature, and thinking also that the new land was exquisitely adapted for barley, did not even listen to proposals for relinquishing the land. They would undoubtedly have gone to law about it, but it happened that both visited the parish priest at Krzesnia. There old Wilk suddenly exclaimed at the end of a fierce quarrel, "Let the people judge him hereafter. I leave it to God's justice rather than to human, God will avenge Himself upon your progeny for the wrong done to me." The stern Macko relented suddenly, he paled and remained silent for a while, then he replied to his quarrelsome neighbor :

"Listen, it is not I who began the affair, but it was the abbot. God knows who is right. But I don't want you to curse Zbyszko, so take the land. May God so grant health and fortune to Zbyszko, as I relinquish it to you from my heart."

He stretched out his hand toward Wilk, but he, knowing him of old, was not a little surprised. But it did not strike him that in that apparently hard heart nestled love for a nephew, and that he was anxious for his welfare. Wilk could not utter one word and remained silent for some time, until the parish priest who was much pleased with the turn of the affair, blessed them with the sign of the cross, then Wilk said :

“ If so, it is quite different ! It is not profit that I am after. I am an old man, and have nobody to leave my possessions to, I am only looking for right. I am even willing to give that which is my own to those who treat me well. And as to your nephew, may God bless him where he is, and spare your old age from weeping for him as I do for my only boy. . . .”

Then they threw themselves into each other's arms, and for some time they contended as to who should take that land. Finally Macko was subdued inasmuch as Wilk had indeed nobody in the world to whom to bequeath his possessions.

Then Macko invited old Wilk to Bogdaniec where he feasted him with plenty of meat and drink. Macko was also very happy, because he thought about the prospect of a good barley crop from those lands ; at the same time, he thought that he had turned away God's displeasure from Zbyszko.

“ If he only returns,” he thought, “ these lands and possessions will not be lacking for him.”

Jagienka was not the less satisfied with the agreement.

When she was informed of the proceedings she said :

"If the merciful Lord Jesus wishes to show that He desires peace and not quarrels, then Zybszko must return to you."

Then Macko's face brightened up as if illuminated by the rays of the sun.

"I think so too," he said, "The Lord is Almighty because He is; but to comprehend His might one must possess understanding."

"You are never in want of cunning," she replied, looking upward.

And after reflecting for a moment she continued:

"But you too, love your Zbyszko! You love him! Hey!"

"Who would not love him," replied the old knight. "What about yourself? Do you hate him?"

Jagienka did not reply directly, but as she sat upon the bench near Macko, she moved nearer, turned her head and pushed him slightly with her elbow.

"Leave me alone," she said. "What have I done to you?"



### CHAPTER III.

HOWEVER the war in Zmudz between the Knights of the Cross and Witold had too much occupied the people in the kingdom of Poland who were interested in its progress. Some were sure that King Jagiello would come to the assistance of his cousin, and great expeditions against the Order appeared to be at hand. The knighthood armed themselves, and it was current among the nobles throughout the country that a considerable number of the nobility of Krakow, members of the king's council were for war. They thought that the time had come to make an end of the enemy who never satisfied with his own, but always thought to seize his neighbor's even when menaced by an attack of a neighboring power. But Macko who was a wise man and experienced in traveling, saw and knew much; he did not believe in immediate war; that he expressed more than once to young Jasko of Zgorze-lice and to other neighbors whom he met at Krzesnia.

"As long as Konrad the grand master lives, nothing will come of it, for he is the most sagacious of all of them and knows that it will be no ordinary war, but a butchery; 'thy death or mine!' In addition to this, knowing the power of the king, he would not permit it."

"Bah! If the king should first declare war?" the neighbors asked.

Macko shook his head. "You see . . . I looked into these things carefully, and more than once I calculated that if the king were a descendant of our

ancient clan, Christian kings for generations, he would have first declared war against the Germans. But our king, Wadyslaw Jagiello, (I do not wish to speak disrespectfully of him, for he is an upright lord, may God keep him in good health), before we took him for our king, was a great Lithuanian prince and a heathen. But he, recently, embraced Christianity, and the Germans tell everywhere that his soul is still pagan. For that reason it does not behove him first to declare war and shed Christian blood; for the same reason he will not go to Witold's assistance, although he wishes to do so, I know it well, because he hates the Knights of the Cross like leprosy."

By such speeches Macko gained for himself the reputation of being a keen man, who could clearly explain everything, and spread it as it were upon the table.

Also when he went to Krzesnia to attend mass, on Sundays, the people surrounded him and listened to his sayings. It became a custom afterward that one or another neighbor, called occasionally upon the old knight at Bogdaniec, for an explanation of news he had received, which even the nobility sometimes failed to understand. He received and conversed with them gladly. And when the visitors departed he never neglected to greet them with words like these :

" You wonder at my genius, but God grant, when Zbyszko returns, you will then have cause to wonder. He deserves to be in the king's council. He is such a gifted and ingenious rascal ! "

When he finished talking to his visitors, he finally repeated the same to himself, also to Jagienka. Zbyszko seemed to both of them far away, like the

king's son in the fable. When spring arrived they could scarcely remain at home. The swallows returned, so did the storks; the birds began to sing in the meadows and the quails called each other in the green beds of grain. The flocks of cranes and swans had flown; only Zbyszko did not return.

But when the birds emigrated from the South, a winged Norther brought rumors from the war. They spoke of battles, and numerous encounters in which Witold was sometimes victorious, sometimes defeated. They also told of great calamities among the Germans, caused by the severe winter and sickness. Finally the good news spread throughout the whole country that Witold, Kiejstuts' valiant son, had captured New Kovno or Gotteswerder, and had totally destroyed it. He had not left one stone or one beam upon another. When the news reached Macko he mounted his horse and hurried to Zgorze-lice.

"Ha," he exclaimed, "we know that place very well; for we, Zbyszko and Skirwoillo, pounded the Knights of the Cross there. There we captured de Lorche. God granted that the German foot should slip. It was a difficult matter to take that castle."

However Jagienka had heard of the destruction of Nowo Kowno before the arrival of Macko. She had even heard something more, namely: that Witold had begun negotiations for peace. The last news was of more interest to her, because should peace be concluded, Zbyszko, if alive, would surely return home.

Then she asked the old knight if the news were trustworthy. Macko bethought himself and answered:

“With Witold everything is credible; he differs entirely from other people, and he is the most subtle among all Christian lords. If he wants to extend his dominion in Russia, he concludes peace with the Germans. If he succeeds in his previous undertaking then he goes again against the Germans and takes them by the head. The Germans can do nothing either against him or against the unfortunate Zmudzians. One time he takes Zmudz from them, at another he returns it to them. He not only returns it to them, but he also assists them in subduing the people. There are some among us, yea, even in Lithuania, who consider his actions against his own unhappy people to be wrong. . . . To tell you frankly, were it not Witold, I, myself, would consider it as an infamous affair. . . . But when I reflect upon the matter I say: ‘Is he not wiser than I am?’ Then he knows what he is doing. I heard from Skirwoillo that his intention was to keep Zmudz as an open running sore, that would never heal, in the calf of the Knights of the Cross. The mothers of Zmudz will always bring forth, and spilling of blood is no harm provided it is not shed in vain.”

“The only thing which concerns me is Zbyszko’s return.”

“If God wills, may He grant that what you had said was uttered in a happy hour!”

Several months yet passed by. News arrived that peace was really concluded. The heavy ears of grain in the fields turned yellow; the patches of buckwheat were ripening; but there was not a word from Zbyszko.

Finally Macko decided to go to Spychow, which was nearer to the confines of Lithuania, get infor-

mation and at the same time inspect the husbandry of the Bohemian.

Jagienka insisted on going with him, but he refused to take her. This led to disputes which lasted a whole week. One evening whilst they were sitting in front of the house and engaged in arguments, a boy from Bogdaniec rushed into the courtyard like a tempest, hatless and barefooted; he approached them and shouted at the top of his voice:

“The young lord has returned!”

Zbyszko returned indeed, but looking very strange; he appeared haggard, weatherbeaten, indifferent and taciturn. The Bohemian, who arrived with his wife at the same time, spoke for Zbyszko and himself. He said then that the expedition seemed to have been very successful for the young knight, because he had placed upon the tombs of Danusia and her mother at Spychow, a whole bunch of ornamental peacock and ostrich feathers taken from the helmets of the Knights of the Cross. He had also brought with him horses and armor which he had taken from his adversaries. Two of those were exceedingly valuable, but they were greatly hacked by the sword and axe. Macko was burning with curiosity to hear everything from his nephew's own lips, but Zbyszko only waved his hand and replied in broken phrases. The third day he fell ill and was confined to his bed. It was then learned that his left side was injured, and that two of his ribs which had been fractured were not properly set, and caused him much pain when he moved or breathed. His former ailments consequent to the attack of the aurochs also returned, and were aggravated by the complete

wasting of his strength and the journey from Spychow. These in themselves were not so threatening, for Zbyszko was young and strong as an oak. But at the same time he felt great weariness, as if all the troubles which he had borne hitherto now began to rack his bones. Macko thought at first that after two or three days' rest in bed all would pass away, but he was disappointed in his expectation. Neither the applications of salves, nor fumigations of spices which the local shepherd ordered, nor the concoctions sent by Jagienka and the priest of Krzesnia, were of avail. Zbyszko gradually grew weaker, more troubled and sad.

"What is the matter with you? Do you want anything?" inquired the old knight.

"I want nothing; I do not care for anything, all is the same to me," replied Zbyszko.

Day after day passed by in the same manner. It crossed Jagienka's mind that there must be some secret matter besides the wonted trouble that worried Zbyszko. She therefore spoke to Macko about it, and suggested that he should once more try to find out the cause.

Macko agreed to this without hesitation; nevertheless after reflecting a little he said:

"Will he not tell you rather than me? Because—as far as love is concerned—he is in love with you; I have already observed that when you move about the house he follows you with his eyes."

"Did you observe it?" asked Jagienka.

"When I say 'he follows you with his eyes,' it is so. When you are away for some time he constantly looks toward the door. Ask him yourself."

They agreed upon it. Nevertheless she could not and dared not act.

But by and by she understood that she ought to speak to him about Danusia and about Zbyszko's love for the departed, but she was unable to say a word about those things.

"You are more clever than I am. You have more understanding and experience than I have. You had better speak to him—I cannot."

Then Macko *volens volens* prepared himself for the affair; and a certain morning, when Zbyszko appeared to be a little better than usual, he began the conversation thus:

"Hlawa told me that you had placed quite a considerable bunch of peacock plumes in the vaults at Spychow."

Zbyszko, who was lying upon his back with his eyes to the ceiling, did not reply, but only affirmed by moving his head.

"Well, the Lord Jesus has prospered you. There is no lack of stragglers but knights are fewer. You can kill as many knechts<sup>1</sup> as you wish, but to kill knights is not quite so easy; one must be very careful with them. But did they come themselves under your sword?"

"I challenged them many times in the open field; at one time they surrounded me in battle," slowly replied Zbyszko.

"Did you bring with you much spoil . . ."

"Prince Witold presented me with part of it."

"Is he always munificent?"

Zbyszko again nodded his head, apparently unwilling to continue the conversation.

But Macko did not give it up as lost and endeavored to come to the point.

"Now tell me candidly, when you had placed

<sup>1</sup> Common soldiers.

that bunch of peacock plumes upon the tombs you must have felt easier? One is always glad when he fulfils his vow? . . . Were you glad? Eh?"

Zbyszko turned his sad eyes away from the ceiling, looked at Macko, and replied with some astonishment:

"No!"

"No? Fear God! I thought that when you had caused that soul in heaven to rejoice, then that would be the end of it."

Zbyszko closed his eyes for a moment, as though absorbed in thought, and finally replied:

"The departed soul does not revel in human blood."

Then silence reigned again:

"Then why did you go to that war?" inquired Macko.

"Why?" replied Zbyszko with a certain surprise: "I thought myself that I should feel easier, I thought that both Danuska and myself would be glad. . . . Then when I left the vault where the coffins are I was greatly astonished that no change had taken place in my mind; that the burden was weighing me down as before. Thus it is quite obvious that the departed do not care for human blood."

"Somebody must have put that idea into your head. You could not have conceived it yourself."

"I discovered it myself from the very fact that the world did not appear to me more joyful after I had performed my vow that it was before. Only Father Kaleb confirmed me."

"To kill an enemy in war is no sin whatever, bah! It is even praiseworthy, and surely those you killed were the enemies of our race."



"I also do not consider myself a sinner on that account and I am not sorry for them."

"But you are continually sorrowing for Danuska."

"Just so; whenever I think about her, I am filled with sorrow. But it is God's will. She is better off in the heavenly court, and I am already accustomed to it."

"Then why do you not shake off your sadness? What do you want?"

"For I know . . ."

"You can have all the rest you want, and your ailments will soon leave you. Go, take a bath, drink a mug of mead whilst you are perspiring and then *hoc!*"

"Well, what then?"

"Then be cheerful."

"How shall I find cheerfulness? I do not find it within myself, and nobody could lend it to me."

"Because you have some secret!"

Zbyszko shrugged his shoulders.

"I have neither gladness nor have I anything to hide."

He said this so frankly that Macko ceased to charge him with a secret. Then he began to smooth his grizzled hair with his broad hand, as he was accustomed to do when seriously trying to reflect, and he finally said:

"Then let me tell you what you are in need of—one thing has come to a close, and the other has not yet begun. Do you understand me?"

"Not quite, but it may be!" replied the young man.

Then he stretched himself like one who is sleepy. Macko, however, was sure that he guessed the

true cause, and he was very glad, and he ceased to be uneasy, and he trusted more than ever in his own understanding and said within himself,

“ I am not at all surprised that the people come to me for advice ! ”

And when Jakienka called, the same evening, after that conversation, she had not yet even dismounted from her horse, when Macko told her that he knew what Zbyszko wanted.

Then she dismounted and proceeded to inquire :

“ Well, what ? What is it ? Tell me ! ”

“ You are the one who possesses the very medicine. ”

“ I ? How ? ”

But Macko embraced her by the waist and whispered something into her ear, but in a moment she sprang from his embrace as if she were scalded and hid her face between the saddle cloth and the high saddle, exclaiming :

“ Go away ! I do not like you ! ”

“ As God is dear to me, I tell you the truth, ” said Macko smilingly.

## CHAPTER IV.

OLD Macko had guessed well, but only half the truth. Indeed part of Zbyszko's life had ended entirely. Whenever he thought about her he was sad, but he said to himself, "Danusia is better off in the heavenly, than in the prince's court." He had got accustomed now to the thought that she was no more in this world, and that it could not be otherwise. When at Krakow he had greatly admired the saintly maiden figures made of glass and framed in the panes of the church windows, colored and shining in the sun : now he imagined Danusia to be one of them. He saw her in profile, transparent and heavenly, her little hands crossed, her eyes turned upward, and playing upon a little lute in the midst of a multitude of redeemed divine musicians who were playing before God's Mother and the Infant Saviour. There was nothing terrestrial left in her, and she appeared so pure and incorporeal, that when he recalled to mind the time when he was in the forest court waiting upon the princess, and she had smiled, conversed and sat down with others at the table, he wondered how such a thing could take place. Already when on the expedition of Witold and the affairs of war and battles absorbed his attention, he ceased to yearn after his dear departed, as a husband yearns after his wife, and he had thought of her as a pious man thinks of his patron saint. In that manner, his love, gradually losing its earthly elements, had developed into a sweeter and ethereal thing, which actually

reminded him of heaven and of downright divine worship.

If he had been a man of weak constitution and deeper thought he might have become a monk, and in the silent cloister life he might have preserved, as a sacred thing, that heavenly remembrance until the time when the spirit was released from its bodily fetters and flew to the infinite, as a bird escapes from its cage. But the third decade of his age had scarcely begun; and he could squeeze with his fist the sap out of green wood shavings, and could deprive a horse of his breath by pressing it with his thighs. He was of that type of the nobles of those days, who if they did not die in their infancy, or become monks, had unlimited bodily strength; they pursued different occupations, either becoming robbers or outlaws and drunkards, or getting married at an early age. They joined the army to defend the country with twenty-four or more children, who were like ferocious wild boars.

But he did not know that he was like one of those, especially as he had fallen sick from the beginning. However, his ribs which were not properly set had grown together, producing an almost imperceptible elevation, and causing him no pain whatsoever, so that he was enabled to put on his coat of mail and his customary apparel. His weariness left him, his abundant blond hair, which had been cut off as a sign of mourning for Danusia, had again grown, half-way to his shoulders. His old wonderful comeliness returned to him. When, a few years before, he had been led to be executed at Krakow he had been handsome and looked like a boy of great family, but now he was more beautiful, a real prince. In his shoulders, chest, loins and

arms he was giant-like, but in his face, maiden-like ; strength and life seethed in him as water boils in a pot ; the protracted rest and bathing had fortified him and vitality went through his bones like flame. He did not know what all that meant, and he regarded himself yet a sick man, and stretched himself in bed, glad to be nursed by Macko and Jagienka, who understood all his wants. At times he felt so well that he thought he was in heaven ; at others, especially when Jagienka was not with him, he felt life to be sad, and beyond endurance. He was then seized with a fit of yawning, stretching and fever, and he promised Macko that when he had recovered his health he would go again to the end of the world to fight Germans and Tartars, or against other savages, so that he might get rid of the life which so heavily weighed him down. But Macko, instead of opposing him, nodded his head as a sign of assent, and at the same time sent for Jagienka whose arrival caused Zbyszko's new plans for war to melt away as snow melts before the spring sun.

Whether sent for or not, she came eagerly, because she loved Zbyszko with all her soul. When at the bishop's and prince's courts in Plock she had seen strong and manly knights of equal fame, who very often had knelt before her and vowed fidelity until death—but Zbyszko was her chosen one, whom she had loved from early childhood, her first love—but made unhappy by some misadventure which increased her love toward him a hundred-fold, not only more than for all the knights but more than for all the princes of the world. Now, since he had begun to regain his health, he had wonderfully improved daily in appearance. Her love almost

changed into distraction and shut out the whole world.

However she did not dare to acknowledge it even to herself, and in Zbyszko's presence she hid it in the most secret manner, fearing lest he might slight her again. Even to Macko, in whom she used to confide everything, now she was careful and silent. Her carefulness might have betrayed her when nursing Zbyszko, but even in that case she endeavored to give other reasons and pretexts for her tenderness. With that object in view, she cunningly said on one occasion to Zbyszko :

"If I take care of you a little it is because of my affection to Macko. What do you think of it? Tell me."

And, as if to arrange the hair upon her brow, she covered her face with her hand; then she studiously looked at him through her fingers; but he, being attacked with an unexpected question, blushed like a maiden, and after a little while replied :

"I think nothing. You are quite another being."

They were silent again for a moment.

"Another?" inquired the girl in a subdued and gentle voice. "Well, what of it. I am another. But, God forbid that I should entirely be mindless of you."

"God reward you for that," replied Zbyszko.

From that time on, they got along well; there was only a kind of awkwardness and embarrassment between them. Sometimes it looked as if they were talking about one thing whilst they were thinking of another. Silence was of frequent occurrence. Zbyszko, lying upon his couch, "followed her movements," as Macko expressed himself, "with his

eyes," because she appeared so wonderfully dazzling that he could not look her in the face. It sometimes happened that their glances met, then their faces would burn and Jagienka's shapely bosom would heave rapidly and her heart beat as if in expectation of hearing something which would cause her very heart to melt. But Zbyszko was silent, because he had completely lost his former daring toward her and was afraid to say an unguarded word lest he might scare her. In face of what he saw with his own eyes, he said to himself that she showed only sisterly friendship on account of her affection for Macko.

Once he spoke to Macko about it. He tried to tell him quietly and even indifferently, but he did not consider how his words sounded like bitter and sad complaints, half sad and half reproachful. But Macko patiently listened to him and finally said:

"You are a fool!"

Then he left. But when he was outside he rubbed his hands and hammered his thighs.

"Ha!" he said to himself. "Then when she could be gotten cheaply, he did not want even to look at her. Now let him be filled with fear! How foolish he was then! I am going to build a castle, meanwhile you can lick your lips with longing. I will not tell you anything nor attempt to remove the scales from your eyes, even if you neigh louder than all the horses of Bogdaniec. Where shavings are thrown upon the fire there the flame will soon burst out. But I will not fan the fire because I am of opinion that it is not necessary."

And he not only did not fan the fire, but he even hindered and irritated Zbyszko like an old cunning

blade, who was glad to play with the inexperienced young man.

Therefore upon a certain occasion, when Zbyszko again repeated to him his intention to join an expedition in a distant land, so that he might get rid of his unhearable life, Macko said to him :

“As long as your upper lip was smooth I directed you, but now you are free. If you are determined to confide in your own understanding and you have concluded to go—then go!”

And Zbyszko almost fell out of his bed with astonishment, and sat up.

“How is that? You do not even oppose me in this?”

“Why should I oppose you? I am only sorry for our clan, which will disappear when you perish. But I may find a remedy for it.”

“What is that?” inquired Zbyszko, anxiously.

“You ask what is it? Well, I have nothing to say. But although I am old I have still strength in my bones. Certainly, Jagienka will be looking for some younger man—but I was a friend of her lamented father—so who knows! . . .”

“You were once the friend of her father,” replied Zbyszko. “But you have never had good wishes for me.—Never! never . . .”

And he broke off, his lips began to quiver, and Macko said :

“Bah! If you absolutely wish to perish, what can I do?”

“Well, do what you like, and I shall start even to-day.”

“You are a fool!” repeated Macko.

He left again and went to inspect the laborers of



Bogdaniec and those whom Jagienka had sent from Zgorzelice and Moczydoly to assist in digging the moat which was to surround the proposed castle.

## CHAPTER V.

INDEED, Zbyszko did not carry out his threat and he did not depart. Instead of that, about a week afterward, he recovered entirely and could not remain in his bed. Macko told him that it was their turn now and that they ought to go to Zgorzelice and thank Jagienka for her kindness toward the old man. Consequently on a certain day bathing himself carefully he resolved to drive thither without delay. With this object in view, he ordered fine apparel to be fetched from his trunks in exchange for the ordinary clothes which he had on. Then he occupied himself with curling his hair. That was not a small nor an easy undertaking, because of the luxuriance of Zbyszko's hair, which fell down over his shoulders like a mane.

In their daily life the knights wore their hair in nets shaped like a mushroom, which was advantageous in time of war, it kept the helmet from excessive chafing; while when going to marriage festivals, or calling upon young ladies, it was put up in beautiful braids, which were very often dressed with white cosmetic to render the hair strong and glossy. Zbyszko now desired to dress his head in that fashion, but two of the women-servants who were unaccustomed to such work, made a failure of it. His hair entangled and crisped after the bath was like the thatch of a hut. They could not even straighten it with the combs of buffalo horn captured from the Frisian knights, not even curry combs which one of the women

brought to him from the stable. Finally Zbyszko became impatient and out of temper; just then Macko entered unexpectedly, accompanied by Jagienka.

"Blessed be Jesus Christ!" said the maiden.

"Forever and ever!" responded Zbyszko with a radiant face. "It is very strange, for we were just about to start for Zgorzelice, and here you are!" And his eyes sparkled with pleasure; for whenever he saw her, it was as though he gazed upon the rising of the sun.

But Jagienka, at the sight of the women crouching upon the ground, tugging with the combs, at the bushy hair of the reclining Zbyszko, began to laugh.

"Ah! what a mop!" she cried, revealing her white teeth between her coral-red lips. "You would do for a scarecrow in a hemp-field or a cherry-orchard to frighten away the birds."

He became glummy, and said: "We wanted to go to Zgorzelice and might have met company there, but here you can make yourself as much at home as you like, for I believe you are always glad to make fun of me."

"I, glad?" she asked. "Good heavens! I just came to invite you to supper, and am not laughing at you, but at these women, for if it were myself, I should soon manage it."

"Oh! Even you would not succeed."

"Who does it for Jasiak?"

"Jasiak is your brother," replied Zbyszko.

"You are right!"

But here the old experienced Macko resolved to come to their assistance.

"In one's own home, the young knight's hair

when too long is cut by his sister, and the husband's by his wife, but if the knight has neither sister nor wife, it is customary for a young lady to do it, even though a stranger."

"Is there really such a custom?" asked Jagienka with lowered eyelids.

"Not only at court but in the castles, indeed even in the king's court," replied Macko.

Then he turned to the women.

"Since you are of no use, go to your own quarters."

"Then let them bring me a basin of water," said the maiden.

Macko departed with the women to comply with the request with the least possible delay. In a few moments he sent in the basin of water which was set down, and the young people were left alone. Jagienka began to rub Zbyszko's hair vigorously with a wet napkin; and when at length it hung down limp and heavy, she sat down to proceed further with the task.

Thus they were close beside one another, each deeply enamored with the other, but embarrassed and silent. At last Jagienka began to arrange his golden locks, and he felt the proximity of her raised arms and hands and he trembled from head to foot, exerting his utmost strength of will to avoid seizing her around her waist and pressing her to his breast.

In the silence their quick breathing could be heard.

"You don't seem well; what is the matter with you?" presently asked Jagienka.

"Nothing!" replied the young knight.

"You breathe so heavily!"

“ You also ! ”

Again there was silence. Jagienka's cheeks flushed like a rose, for she felt that Zbyszko's eyes did not leave her face for a second; so, in her desire to know the real cause of his confusion, she again asked :

“ Why are you staring so ? ”

“ Does it annoy you ? ”

“ It does not annoy me ; I only ask . ”

“ Jagienka ! ”

“ What ? ”

Zbyszko took a deep breath, sighed and moved his lips as though in preparation for a long speech, but apparently his courage failed him, so he only replied :

“ Jagienka ! ”

“ What ? ” . . .

“ I fear to tell you something ! ”

“ Don't be afraid ; I am only a girl, not a dragon ! ”

“ True, you are not a dragon, but Uncle Macko said that he wanted to take you . . . ”

“ He wants to, but not for himself . ”

And she was silent as though frightened by her own words.

“ By the love of God ! My Jagus, what do you say to it, Jagus ? ” exclaimed Zbyszko.

But her eyes unexpectedly filled with tears and her exquisite mouth began to twitch, and her voice was so low that Zbyszko could scarcely hear it, when she said :

“ Father and the abbot wished . . . and I — well,—you know ! ”

At these words joy burst out in his heart like a

sudden flame, he snatched her in his arms and lifted her up as if she were a feather, and began to cry in frenzied tones :

“Jagus, Jagus! You are my beloved sun; hey, hey!”

And he shouted so loud that old Macko, thinking that something extraordinary had happened, rushed into the room. When he saw Jagienka in Zbyszko's arms, he was astonished, for it had all happened with such unexpected rapidity; and he exclaimed :

“In the name of the Father and the Son! What are you doing, boy?”

Zbyszko set Jagienka down and sprang toward him and both wanted to kneel to him, but before they could do so the old man seized them in his bony arms and pressed them to his breast with all his might.

“Blessed be He!” he said. “I knew that it would end so, and I am delighted. God bless you, I can now die in peace! . . . A girl of gold! . . . A favorite with God and man! . . . Upright. . . . And now that I have attained such happiness, let come what will! . . . God sends trials, but He also sends rejoicing! I must go to Zgorzelice to let Jasiak know of it. Hey! If only old Zych were alive! . . . and the abbot! . . . But I embrace you for both of them. To tell you the truth, I love you both. I am ashamed to say how much.”

And although he was usually unemotional, a lump rose in his throat, again he kissed Zbyszko and then Jagienka on both cheeks; and half choked with his tears he said: “Honey! Not a girl!” Then he went out to the stable to saddle the horse. As he passed the sunflowers growing in front of the

house, he gazed at their dark centres surrounded by yellow petals; he was exactly like a drunken man.

"Well, there are plenty of you," he said. "But the Gradys at Bogdaniec shall be more numerous!"

Then he went to the stable and began to mutter and count:

"Bogdaniec . . . the abbot's estates . . . Spychow . . . Moczydoly. . . God always knows to what He leads! The time will also come for old Wilk to go; then Brzozowa will also be worth buying. . . . Fine lands! . . ."

Meanwhile Jagienka and Zbyszko left the house beaming with joy like the sun.

"Dear uncle!" Zbyszko shouted from a distance.

He turned, opened his arms and began to shout as if he were himself in the woods.

"Hallo! Hallo! Hark forward!"

**PART ELEVENTH.**





## CHAPTER I.

ZBYSZKO and Jagienka lived at Moczydoly, and old Macko built them a castle at Bogdaniec. He took pains in its construction. He desired to build the ramparts of stone and mortar and the watch-tower of brick, which was difficult to procure in that neighborhood. During the first year he dug the moat which was not so difficult a task, because upon the height where the castle had to be erected were old ditches, dating, perhaps from the time of the Pagans. Those ditches had only to be cleaned of the overgrown trees and vegetation, and then deepened and strengthened. During the process of deepening those ditches, they also struck a copious spring which filled the moat in a short time, so that Macko had to contrive a means for an outlet of the water. Then he built a palisade upon the mound wherein he collected building material for the walls of the little castle, such as thick oak beams which even three laborers could not reach round, and larch-beams that do not decay either under a clay floor, or under a turf covering. In spite of the powerful laborers of Zgorzelice and Moczydoly he did not set about raising the walls of the castle till after the first year, but now he went to work with more energy because Jagienka had brought forth twins. Heaven was opened for the old knight. At all events, he had now somebody to labor for. He also knew that the Grady (Hail) clan would not be extinguished and the *tempa pod-*

*kowa*<sup>1</sup> would yet more than once be bathed in the blood of the enemy.

They named the twins: Macko and Jasko. The old man boasted that there were none their equal throughout the whole kingdom, and it was early yet; he loved them dearly. Jagienka was more than all the world to him. Those who praised her in his presence could obtain everything from him. Though people greatly envied Zbyszko, they praised her not solely for the profit which they thereby gained, for she actually shone in the neighborhood like the most beautiful blossom among the flowers of the meadow.

She brought her husband an immense dowry, yea, what is more than dowry: her great love and beauty which dazzled the people's eyes, and her dignity and courage were such that any knight would be proud of their possession. It was nothing to her, only a few days after her confinement, to get up and attend to household affairs, then accompany her husband hunting, or go early on horseback from Moczydoly to Bogdaniec and return before noon to her Macko and Jasiek. Therefore her husband loved her as the apple of his eye, Macko loved her, also the servants for whom she had kind feelings loved her. And on Sundays when she went to attend church at Krzesnia, a murmur of admiration and praise greeted her. Her old suitor, the terrible Cztań of Rogowa, who married a farmer's daughter, and who after mass drank at the inn with old Wilk of Brzozowa, said, after the carouse: "Your son and myself fought

<sup>1</sup>The coat of arms of the "Grady" (Hail) clan was the *tempa podkowa*, i.e., a dull horseshoe with a cross in the centre.—Translator.

more than once on her account, and wanted to take her, but we could not; we might as well have tried to reach the moon in the sky."

But others loudly confessed that such an one could only be found at the royal court of Krakow, for, besides her riches, beauty and courtliness, they also praised her exceedingly for her courage and strength. All agreed in affirming: "That she was such a strong woman that she could hold a bear fast with her spear, in the forest, and who had no need to crush nuts with her teeth, but to place them on the chair and suddenly sit down upon them, then the nuts would be crushed as if under a millstone." Thus she was praised in the parish of Krzesnia, and in the adjacent villages; yea, even in the town of Sieradz, where the wojewoda resided. Nevertheless, the envy of Zbyszko of Bogdaniec for his good luck in possessing such a treasure was not excessive, because the fame of his own valor was greater than that of any one else in the neighborhood.

The young noblemen and squires told one another long stories concerning the numerous Germans whom Zbyszko had killed, when he fought under the leadership of Witold, and how he had made them lick the dust in single combat. They related that nobody ever escaped him; that at Malborg (Marienburg) he had thrown twelve knights from their horses; Ulrych's brother was one of them. Finally, that he was even able to fight the Krakowian knights, and that the very invincible Zawisza Czarny was his well-wishing friend.

Some of them were loath to believe those extravagant stories, and took them to be fables. Yet when there was a question of preparing for war

when the Polish knights had to go with others to the army, they said: "There is Zbyszko," and only afterward they spoke of the shaggy-headed Cztan of Rogowa and other fighters in the locality. But those, as far as valor and knightly prowess were concerned, were far inferior to the young proprietor of Bogdaniec.

His great riches also singled him out to an equal public estimation as did his fame. Because, with Jagienka, he came into possession of Moczydoly and the large property of the abbot. That was not gotten by his merit; but before that he had already possessed Spychow, together with the immense treasures which Jurand had amassed. Besides that, it was whispered among the people, that the very spoils which the knights of Bogdaniec had taken, such as arms, horses, garments and jewelry, amounted to the value of three or four good villages.

They saw in that the special favor of God upon the Gradys, the clan of the *tempa podkowa* coat of arms, who only a short time before were so reduced, that besides the deserted Bogdaniec, they possessed nothing, while now it had outgrown, in prosperity, everybody else in the whole neighborhood. "It is very strange," the older inhabitants said, "that in Bogdaniec only one ruined house remained after the conflagration, which, for lack of laborers, they were obliged to leave with a relative and now a castle has been erected." They specially wondered, and this thought was accompanied by a certain foreboding that the whole nation was also irresistibly hastening on toward immense gains, and if God wills it must actually come to pass. There was, therefore, no bad feeling in that wonder. On the

contrary they were, however, proud of their knights of Bogdaniec who showed themselves to be a decided example of how much can be achieved by one who has a will, as well as strong arms, manliness, knightly honor, and love of adventure. More than one on considering this, felt that the country home in his fatherland was too narrow for him, whilst just beyond the walls he could acquire great riches and broad lands, gain immense wealth for himself and at the same time benefit the kingdom. And that superabundant power which was felt by families permeated the whole community, so much so that it reached the boiling point which must eventually overflow.

The wise lords of Krakow and the peace-loving king could have checked that power for a season and put off the war with the eternal enemy for a long time. But no human power was able to entirely smother it or even check this impetus tending toward universal greatness.

## CHAPTER II.

MACKO passed his days happily. He often told his neighbors that he had obtained more than he wished for. Even his old age, which whitened his hair and beard, did not tell upon him. He was healthy, rugged and strong. His heart was filled with joy such as he never had experienced before. His wonted stern looks gradually changed to benignant features. His eyes benevolently smiled upon the people. He was convinced in his soul that his troubles were ended forever, and that no evil or mishap could trouble the happy days of life which were passing peacefully and gliding by like a shining stream. Fighting unto old age, then engaging in husbandry and augmenting the estate for his "grandchildren," had been his paramount wishes at all times. Now those very wishes were being fulfilled in a most remarkable manner.

Everything turned out well. The woods were considerably thinned. The overgrown places were cleaned, plowed and sown with various green cereals. Forty mares with their foals which were grazing upon the meadows, Macko inspected daily. Herds of cattle and a flock of sheep were in the pasture fields upon the hillsides and dales.

Bogdaniec was entirely changed. The deserted hamlet became a respectable village, and the eyes of those came near it, were dazzled by the watch-tower and the white walls of the new castle, which the rays of the sun gilded in the morning, and painted with purple in the evening.

Therefore old Macko's heart was filled with joy

when he considered the prosperous state of the herds and estate, and he did not object when people remarked that he was a lucky man.

One year after the birth of the twins, another boy came into the world, whom Jagienka, in honor and memory of her father, named Zych. Macko received him joyfully, the thought that if that state of affairs were to continue the estate would eventually be divided into small parcels, did not trouble him in the least.

"What did we possess?" he once said to Zbyszko. "Nothing! But God provided. Old Pakosz of Sulislawic," he said, "has only one village, but he has twenty-two sons, yet they are not starving. Are there few lands in the kingdom and in Lithuania? Are there only few villages and castles in the possession of the dog-brothers, the Knights of the Cross? Hey! If only God will grant it! There will be comfortable residences for them, since there are castles there entirely constructed of red bricks, and our gracious king would make them dwellings for castellans." This was a proper consideration, for the Order stood at the very summit of power, riches, strength, and its multitudes of disciplined soldiers surpassed those of the western kingdoms. But Macko only thought of the castles of the Knights of the Cross as the future residences of his "grandchildren." To be sure there were many in Jagiello's dominion who were of the same opinion, not only because the lands, which were occupied by the Order, had once belonged to Poland, but because of that strong feeling which agitated within the nation's breast and threatened to give vent on every side.

About the fourth year, counting from Zbyszko's



marriage, the castle was completed. That was accomplished by the help of not only local workmen of Zgorzelice and Moczydoly, but also the neighbors, specially old Wilk of Brzozowa, who being alone after the death of his son was very friendly with Macko; then he became also fond of Zbyszko and Jagienka. Macko adorned the rooms with the spoils which Zbyszko and himself had taken in war, and with those he had brought from Spychow after Jurand's death; to those he added the wealth inherited from the abbot and that which Jagienka brought from her own home. Window-glass he brought from Sieradz, and he furnished the rooms magnificently. Just about the fifth year, when the outbuildings, such as stables, barns, kitchen, baths and cellars, the latter of which he rendered specially durable with stone and mortar, were finished, Zbyszko and his family moved into the castle. But Macko, in spite of Zbyszko and Jagienka's entreaties, refused to move from his old home into the castle. The reason for his refusal was as follows:

"I will die where I was born. When Bogdaniec was totally destroyed by fire during the civil war between the Grzymalits and Nalenczes, excepting this old cottage, all buildings and houses, yes, even fences, were gone. The people attributed its rescue from the fire, to the moss-covered roof; but, I think even in that it was God's favor, it was His will that we should return here and grow up again. During the time of our warfare I often lamented that we had no place worth while returning to. But I was not entirely justified in saying that. While it was true that there was nothing to husband and nothing to eat; yet there was a place

for shelter. It is quite different with you, you are young people, but I think I cannot give up the old house, because it did not desert us and I ought not to abandon it."

And he remained there; nevertheless he loved to call at the little castle so that he might view its grandeur and stateliness, compare it with the former dwellings, and, at the same time, see Zbyszko, Jagienka and the "grandchildren." A considerable part of what he saw was his own work, yet he was seized with pride and wonder. Sometimes his old friend Wilk called upon him to have a chat at the fireside, or Macko called upon him at Brzozowa with the same object. On one of those visits when speaking of the "new order of things," Macko declared:

"You know, sometimes, I cannot help wondering. It is a well-known fact that Zbyszko was at the king's castle in Krakow (yes, there he nearly lost his head), in Mazowia, in Marienburg, and with Prince Janusz. Jagienka too was brought up in affluence. But they had no castle of their own. . . . But now they appear as though they always possessed one. I tell you, they constantly move about the rooms giving orders to the servants, and when they are tired they sit down. They look like real castellans! They also have rooms where they dine together with the mayors, inspectors and servants. There are elevated seats for him and her, those sitting below them wait until their lordships have been served with repast: such is court etiquette. One has to bring to mind that after all they are not great lords, but a nephew and niece who shake my hand, make me sit in the first place and call me their benefactor."

"The Lord Jesus prosper them for this!" remarked old Wilk.

Then he sorrowfully shook his head, drank his mead, stirred the fire with the iron poker and said:

"My boy has been killed!"

"It is the Lord's will."

"The five elder ones they killed long ago, but that one was the bravest of all," a real Wilk (Wolf). "He also would have had his own castle if he had survived."

"I would have preferred that Cztan had been killed."

"As to Cztan, he seems to be able to carry a millstone upon his shoulders, but my boy thrashed him many a time; mine possessed knightly training. Cztan's wife strikes him in the snout, although he is a strong man, but he is a fool."

"Hej! what a hunch!" added Macko.

He also occasionally exalted Zbyszko's knightly training and wisdom, to the skies. He fought at Malborg with the most renowned knights. "He was quite at ease in his conversation with princes; that was as easy to him as cracking nuts." Macko also praised Zbyszko's order and management, without which the property would soon be eaten up by the expenses of the castle.

In order that old Wilk should not go away with the impression that such a thing could threaten Zbyszko, Macko finished his talk in suppressed tones:

"With God's grace, there is plenty of wealth; yea, more than the people are aware of. But keep what I tell you to yourself."

The public, however, guessed it; they knew and

even overestimated the amount of the riches which the Bogdaniec people had brought from Spychow. They said, that the proprietors of Bogdaniec imported barrellfuls of money from Mazowsze. Macko also accommodated, with a dozen or so of *grzywiens*, the well-to-do proprietors of Koniecpole. This was absolute proof to the neighbors of his immense riches. Owing to that, the Bogdaniec people kept on growing, the estimation of the people grew, guests were never lacking in the castle. And Macko, although somewhat stingy, did not look upon it with displeasure, because he knew that even that contributed to the fame of the family.

The christenings were celebrated with special liberality ; and once a year, at the festival of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, Zbyszko prepared a great feast for his neighbors, upon which occasion the ladies of the country squires came to see the knightly splendor and listen to the tales, and dance with the young knights, in the light of tar torches until morning. It was then that the eyes of old Macko were satiated at the sight of Zbyszko and Jagienka who were courtly and lordly.

Zbyszko had grown big and stout. But in spite of his strong and manly figure, his face still remained very youthful. However, when he fastened his abundant hair with a purple band, and arrayed himself in holiday attire, embroidered with silver and gold ; then, not only Macko, but many a nobleman said within himself: " God have mercy ! He looks like a real prince in his castle." But the knights knowing the etiquette of the West very often knelt before Jagienka, begging to be permitted to take her name as the lady of their thoughts, That was owing to her glowing health,

youth, strength and stature. Even the old proprietor of Koniecpole who was the woyewoda of Sieradz, was amazed at her appearance. He compared her with the dawn of the morning; yea, even with the sun, "the light-giver of the world which even fills old bones with hot life."

### CHAPTER III.

HOWEVER, in the fifth year, when all the estates were in perfect order, when the tower was finished and the flag with the *tempa podkowa* (horseshoe and cross) on it, had been floating from its pinnacle for some months, and Jagienka happily rocking a fourth son whose name was Jurand, old Macko said to Zbyszko :

“Everything is in a prosperous condition, and if the Lord would only grant one more thing I could then die in peace.”

Zbyszko looked at him inquiringly, and after a while he asked :

“Do you perhaps mean war with the Knights of the Cross? For there is nothing else which you are in want of.”

“What I say is what I have told you before,” replied Macko. “That as long as the grand master, Konrad, lives, there will be no war.”

“But, is he going to live forever?”

“I also cannot live forever, therefore I am thinking of something else.”

“But what is it?”

“. . . Better not to tell it beforehand. I shall meanwhile go to Spychow; maybe I shall also call upon the princes at Plock and Czersk.”

That reply did not much surprise Zbyszko, because Macko had visited Spychow several times during the last few years; Zbyszko therefore, only asked :

“Will you remain there long?”

“Longer than I am accustomed, because I shall remain for sometime in Plock.”

Accordingly, a week later, Macko had started upon his journey and had taken with him several wagons and good arms (in case it should be necessary to fight in the lists). He announced before parting that he would possibly be absent longer than usual; and he actually absented himself longer. Nothing was heard of him for six months, when Zbyszko began to be alarmed, and finally went himself to Spychow, but he met Macko on the road near Sieradz, and both returned home.

The old knight looked somewhat cloudy, but he minutely questioned Zbyszko about everything that had transpired during his absence. When he learned that all was well his face brightened and began first to speak of his own affairs:

“You must know that I was at Malborg,” he said.

“Did you say Malborg?”

“Where else?”

Zbyszko looked at him for a while in astonishment. Then he suddenly struck his thighs and said:

“Oh, God! and I have forgotten my vow [to fight them] until death!”

“It was permissible for you to forget since you have fulfilled your vows,” replied Macko. “But God forbid that I should neglect my solemn oath and honor. It is not our custom to forget anything. And, so help me the Holy Cross! as long as there is breath in my nostrils I shall not forget it.”

Then Macko’s face darkened and it assumed that determined and threatening mien which Zbyszko had been accustomed to behold when in camp with

Witold and Skirwoillo before a fight with the Knights of the Cross.

"Well?" he asked. "Did he escape you?"

"He did not get away, but he did not make an appearance."

"Why, then?"

"He became grand *comthur*."

"You say Kuno Lichtenstein?"

"Yes, they may even elect him grand master. Who knows! Even now he thinks himself on a level with the princes. They say that he directs everything, and all the affairs of the Order are upon his shoulders. The grand master does nothing without him. How can such a one appear in the lists? Why you would merit ridicule."

Zbyzko's eyes sparkled with anger and he asked:

"Did they deride you?" asked Zbyszko, whose eyes suddenly flashed with anger.

"Princess Alexandra at Plock laughed; she said to me: 'Go and rather challenge Cæsar of Rome. We know that Lichtenstein; was challenged by such great men as Zawisza Czarny, Powala and Paszko of Biskupice, and yet they received no reply because he cannot. He lacks no courage, but he is a friar, and he is so busy with the important affairs of the Order that such things do not enter his head. He would miss more honor in accepting the challenge to combat than by not paying attention to it.' Such were her words."

"What did you say to it?"

"I was greatly worried, but I said: 'I must, nevertheless, go to Malborg, and tell God and the world.' I did what I could. Then I asked the princess to devise some errand for me and provide me with a letter to Malborg, for without it, I



knew, I should not have been able to come out alive from that wolf's lair. However, I thought thus: He refused to settle the affair either with Zawisza, or Powala, or Paszko, but if I, in the presence of the grand master and all *comthurs* and guests, strike him in the mouth, pull his beard and moustache, he will then be obliged to fight."

"God help you!" exclaimed Zbyszko vehemently.

"Why?" said the old knight. "There is a means for everything. Only one must not lose his head. But here God had withdrawn His power, for I did not find him at Malborg. They told me that he had been sent to Witold as an envoy. I did not know then what to do, wait for his return or follow him up. I was afraid lest I should miss him. But as I was well acquainted with the grand master and other dignitaries, I let out the secret and told them why I came. But they exclaimed: 'That is impossible.'"

"Why?"

"Entirely for the same reason that the princess explained to me in Plock. The grand master then said: 'What would you think of me if I were to accept the challenge of every knight in Mazowsze and Poland?' Well—he was right, for he would have long ago ceased to exist.

"The two dignitaries marveled and talked about it at the table in the evening and, I tell you, it buzzed like in a beehive, especially among the guests who at once formed a crowd and shouted: 'Kuno cannot, but we can!' I then selected three of them with each of whom I wished to fight in turn. But the grand master, after many entreaties, only permitted me to fight with one of them whose

name was also Lichtenstein, and was also related to Kuno."

"What then!" exclaimed Zbyszko.

"Well, I here have brought you his armor, but it is so much cracked that not a *grzywien* could be gotten for it."

"For God's sake then! You have already fulfilled your vow."

"I thought so myself at that moment, and was glad of it. But when I reflected, I said to myself, 'No! It is not the same!' Now for that very reason I have no peace of mind whatever."

But Zbyszko began to comfort him.

"You know me that in such affairs I too do not relax my duties. But if similar things were to happen to me, I should feel satisfied. And, I tell you, that even the greatest knights of Krakow would confirm my opinion. Even the very Zawisza who excels in knightly honor, I am sure, would not act differently."

"Do you think so?" asked Macko.

"Only consider: they are the most famous throughout the world. They too have challenged him, and none of them have succeeded in accomplishing as much as you have done. You had made a solemn vow to kill Lichtenstein, and you have killed a Lichtenstein."

"It is possible," said the old knight.

But Zbyszko, who was anxious to know the knightly affairs, inquired:

"Well then, pray relate: was he a young or old man? Did you fight on horseback or on foot?"

"He was about thirty-five years of age; he was on horseback, his beard was so long that it reached to his belt. God helped me that I injured him with

my lance, but afterward we fought with swords. Then, I tell you, blood so streamed from his mouth that his whole beard looked like an icicle."

"But did you not repeatedly complain that you are getting old?"

"When on horseback, or standing upon the ground, I am able to hold on well. But when armored I am quite unable to jump into the saddle."

"But Kuno himself would not have escaped you."

The old man contemptuously waved his hand as a sign that he could manage Kuno with greater facility. Then they went to look at the conquered "plates" which Macko had brought with him as a sign of conquest. Otherwise the fragments were too much damaged and worthless. Only the parts covering the thighs and back were intact and were of very excellent workmanship.

"Nevertheless, I should have preferred if it had been Kuno," said Macko gloomily.

"God knows what is better. If Kuno becomes grand master, then it will be impossible for you to get him unless in some great battle."

"I listened to the conversation of the people," replied Macko. "Some said that after Konrad Kuno would be elected; whilst others thought that Konrad's brother, Ulryk, will be chosen."

"I should prefer Ulryk," said Zbyszko.

"And I too; do you know why? Because Kuno is cunning and has more understanding whilst Ulryk is more violent. He is a real knight who observes knightly honor. But to engage in a war with us causes him to tremble. They also said that if he were to become master there would be such an upheaval as never happened before. And

Konrad is subject to frequent fainting feats. Even in my presence he was once taken with one of them. Hej, maybe we shall live to see it!"

"May God grant it! But are there any new disensions in the kingdom?"

"There are old and new ones. A Knight of the Cross never changes. Although he knows that you are the stronger than he and he would be worsted in fight, he will lay in wait for you, because he cannot help it—he cannot do otherwise."

"Because they think that the Order is more powerful than all kingdoms."

"Not all of them think so but many, and among those is Ulryk. As a matter of fact it is a great power."

"But remember what Zyndram of Maszkow said!"

"I do remember. Every year they are getting worse there. A brother does not entertain his brother as much as they did me when none of the knights observed it. There the people have enough of them."

"Then we shall not have to wait long."

"Not long. But it may be some time," replied Macko, and, after hesitating for a moment, he added: "But, meanwhile, it is necessary to work hard, and increase the property so as to be enabled to take the field well prepared."

## CHAPTER IV.

BUT the Grand Master Konrad did not die until one year later. Jasko of Zgorzelice, Jagienka's brother, who was the first to hear the news of the grand master's death at Sieradz, and of the election of Ulryk of Jungingen, was also the one who first brought the tidings to Bogdaniec. There, as well as in all noble houses, the news made a great stir.

"Never before was such a time," said old Macko, gravely.

On hearing the news, Jagienka brought in all her children to Zbyszko, and even herself began to take leave of him as though he were to start for the war the following morning. Macko and Zbyszko knew that the war would not break out as swiftly as a fire in a furnace. They were, however, equally sure that there must be a war. They therefore set to work to get ready. They gathered horses and arms, and drilled their shield-bearers and servants; also the heads of the villages, who according to German law were obliged to present themselves on horseback ready for the expedition; and the poor nobility and squires, were glad to join the more powerful lords. The same was done in all other courts. The hammer was busy in all blacksmiths' shops, coats of mail were furnished everywhere, spears and leather straps were greased and wagons mended. Stores of groats and smoked meat were laid up. In front of the churches on Sundays and holidays people inquired for news, but when there was none, they quietly dispersed

with a sad expression on their faces, because every one of them was deeply convinced that the time had arrived when there must be a final settlement with that terrible enemy of the whole race, and the kingdom could not prosper in everything except, according to the words of St. Bridget: "their teeth be broken and their right hand cut off."

When Macko and Zbyszko happened to be at Krzesnia they were specially surrounded by the people who were trying to get information and advice from them, because they were considered as men who were acquainted with the Order and experienced in warfare with the Germans. They tried not only to get the news but to be informed of the means necessary to fight the Germans, the best way to meet them in battle and their tactics in war, also in what things they excelled the Poles and in what they were inferior, also, in case the spears should break, whether it would be advisable to shatter their armor with the axe or with the sword.

Macko and Zbyszko, as a matter of fact, were experienced in those things. They were therefore listened to with great attention, so much the more since it was generally known that the coming war would not be an easy matter, that they would have to measure their strength with the foremost knights of all countries, and not to count upon partial wounding of the enemy which might occur here and there, but fight it out thoroughly, or utterly perish. The young knights then said among themselves: "It must necessarily happen soon: their death or ours." And the generation which in its innermost soul felt its coming greatness did not weaken in that desire. On the contrary that desire grew with every hour and every day, but

they approached the work without empty boast or bravado, but rather gathered together with a determined earnestness which showed that they were ready to die for the cause.

“Death is decreed to us or to them.”

But meanwhile the days passed on and multiplied, but war had not come. Indeed they spoke of certain disagreements between King Wladyslaw and the Order, even concerning the lands of Dobrzyn, although they had been already redeemed years ago; also of strife beyond the border, and of a certain place Drezdenko, of which many people now heard for the first time. But war was not yet declared. Some even began to be doubtful whether there would be war at all, since there were always disputes which terminated in meetings and negotiation and dispatching of envoys.

The news went abroad that some envoys of the Knights of the Cross had left for Krakow, whilst Polish ambassadors had left for Marienburg. It was mooted that the kings of Hungary and Bohemia, yea, even the Pope, would mediate. But nothing was known concerning any agreements at Krakow. Hence various rumors, very often strange and unlikely, were circulating among the people. But there was no sign of war.

Finally, even Macko, who had heard much of threats of war and treaties, did not know what to think of it. He therefore resolved to visit Krakow himself, and try to get authentic news. He remained there a short time, and returned about the sixth week. His countenance was bright, and at Krzesnia, when he was surrounded by the usual crowd of the inquisitive squires for news, he answered their numerous questions with an inquiry :

"Have you sharpened the spear-heads and axes?"

"What? Now! For God's sake! What news? Whom have you seen?" These exclamations came from all sides.

"Whom have I seen? Why I saw Zyndram of Maszkow! And what news? Such news that, most probably, it will be necessary to saddle the horses at once."

"For God's sake! How is that? Tell us!"

"But did you hear about Drossen?"

"Yes, we did hear of Drossen, but it is a small castle, and the lands there are not larger than yours at Bogdaniec."

"Is that trifling affair a *casus belli*?"

"Surely it is a trifle: there were more important places in dispute, but it generally ended in nothing."

"Do you know the proverb Zyndram told me concerning the Drezdenko pretext?"

"Tell us quickly, we are burning for news."

"He said thus: 'A blind man walked along the road and he stumbled at a stone and fell down. He fell because he was blind, but the stone was the real cause of his fall.' Drezdenko is such a stone."

"How is that? The Order still exists."

"Do you not understand it? Then let me tell you differently: when a vessel is too full, then one drop more will cause it to overflow."

The knights were seized with such great enthusiasm that they wanted to mount their horses and start for Sieradz at once, and Macko was obliged to check them.

"Be ready," he told them. "But wait patiently. They also do not forget us."



They therefore continued their preparations, but they waited so long that some of them again began to doubt. But Macko doubted not. Just as by the flight of birds one recognizes the advent of spring, so also the experienced Macko was able to infer from various signs that war was at hand,—yea, a great war.

At first, therefore, orders for a general hunt through all forests and wildernesses of the kingdom were issued. It was on such a great scale that even the oldest inhabitants remembered none like it. Thousands of colonists gathered for the chase of whole herds of aurochs, wild cattle, stags, wild boars and various smaller animals. The woods were smoking for weeks and months. This smoke proceeded from the fires wherein meat was being cured, and then forwarded to the chieftowns, thence to the storehouses at Plock. It was obvious that the stores were intended for great armies. Macko well knew what to think of it, because great hunts were usually ordered by Witold whenever he was preparing for a great expedition into Lithuania.

But there were also other signs. For instance: the peasants, serving under the Germans, began to escape in great numbers across the frontier to Poland and to Mazowsze. In the neighborhood of Bogdaniec mainly appeared subjects, of German knights from Silesia. The same movement occurred everywhere, but especially in Mazowsze.

The Bohemian who managed the property at Spsychow, in Mazowsze, despatched thence about a dozen Prussian Mazurs who had taken shelter with him. They begged to be permitted to take part in the war, in the infantry. "Because," they said, "they wanted to avenge the wrongs done to them

by the Knights of the Cross, whom they abhorred with perfect hatred." They also related that whole villages beyond the frontier, in Prussia, were entirely deserted; because the peasants had escaped with their families across the frontier, to Mazowsze. The Knights of the Cross had hanged those of the fugitives whom they had overtaken, but nothing could restrain the unhappy people from fleeing. More than one preferred death to life under the terrible German bondage. The whole country was soon filled with "old beggars and minstrels"<sup>1</sup> from Prussia. All were bent for Krakow. They streamed from all directions, not only from Dauzig, Marienburg and Thorn, but even from distant Krolewca (Königsberg) and from all Prussian cities and commanderies. There were among these not only beggars, but also country schoolmasters, sextons, organists, and other church attendants, and even clerics and priests.

It was surmised that those beggars, etc., were the bearers of information about everything which was going on in Prussia, of the preparations for war, of the fortifying of castles, of the garrisons and of mercenary soldiers and guests.

They spoke in whispers among themselves of how the woyewodas in the chief towns, also the Krakowian councilmen, were locked up with them for entire hours, listening to them and writing down their information. Some of them sneaked back to Prussia, and then again made their appearance in the kingdom.

It was rumored at Krakow that the king and the

<sup>1</sup> An old beggar or itinerant minstrel is called *dziad*, meaning "grandfather."

lords got their information, at every step the Knights of the Cross had taken, from those beggars.

Things were contrary at Marienburg. A certain priest who was a fugitive of that capital, tarried for awhile with the proprietors of Koniecpole; he told them that the grand master, Ulryk, and other Knights of the Cross, were not anxious to get information about Poland, for they were sure that with one stroke they would subdue and overthrow the whole kingdom forever, so that no trace would be left. The priest then repeated the very words which the grand master had used at the banquet at Malborg: "The more there are of them, the cheaper will the sheepskin coats be in Prussia." Therefore they gladly and drunkenly prepared themselves, trusting in their own powers and in the assistance which they got even from distant kingdoms.

But in spite of all those signs, preparations and exertions, war did not come as soon as the people would have liked. The young master at Bogdaniec yearned also for war. Everything had been ready with him for some time. He thirsted for fame and fight. Every day's delay became a burden to him. He often upbraided his uncle as though war or peace depended upon him.

"You promised that there would surely be war," he said. "Now, there is no sign of it."

Upon that Macko replied:

"You are clever, but not sufficiently so! Do you not see what is going on?"

"But if the king at the last hour comes to an understanding? They say he wishes no war."

"He wishes none, but who was it, if not he him-

self, who exclaimed : ' I should not be a king if I permitted Drezdenko to be taken,' and the Germans have taken Drezdenko and up to now keep on managing it. Bah ! The king has no desire to shed Christian blood. But the nobility, who are very wise and are aware of the superior Polish strength, are pinning the Germans against the wall. One thing I tell you, if there were no Drezdenko, there would be another pretext."

" As I understand it, Drezdenko was taken by the master Konrad, and he surely feared the king."

" He feared because he, more than anybody else, knew the strength of the Poles. But it is owing to the covetousness of the Order, which he could not stem. They told me at Krakow as follows : Old von Ost, the proprietor of Drezdenko, at the time when the Knights of the Cross had taken Neumark, did homage as a vassal of the king, because that property had belonged to Poland from time immemorial. He therefore wished that it should remain with Poland. But the Knights of the Cross invited him to Malborg. They gave him wine to drink ; then they obtained from him what they wanted. Then that transaction was the climax of the king's patience."

" True, that was enough to make him lose his patience ! " exclaimed Zbyszko.

But Macko said :

" But it is just as Zyndram of Maszkow said : ' Drezdenko is only a stumbling-block that causes the blind to fall. ' "

" But if the Germans were to give up Drezdenko, what then ? "

" Then there would be another stumbling-block. But no Knight of the Cross will give up that

which he has once swallowed unless you twist his guts, which God grant us to do soon."

"No!" shouted Zbyszko, vehemently. "Konrad might have given up, but Ulryk, never. He is a real and unblemished knight, but he is very fiery."

Thus they talked with each other, and meanwhile events rolled along as a stone thrust by the foot along the footpath down the hillside, increasing in impetus as it descends the precipice.

News was suddenly thundered throughout the whole country that the Knights of the Cross had attacked and seized Santok of old Poland, which was held in fee by the Johannites.

When the Polish envoys had arrived to congratulate Ulryk on having been elected to the dignity of grand master, he had purposely absented himself from Marienburg, and instructed the officials of his court that all intercourse with the king and Poland should be transacted in the German language instead of Latin. He had shown by that what kind of a man he was.

The nobility of Krakow secretly pushed on to war. They understood that he would declare war not only openly, but rush to it headlong and with such audacity, that, from the Polish nation's point of view, none of Ulryk's predecessors had ever ventured, even when they were really stronger and the kingdom of Poland was smaller than now.

Nevertheless, the less fiery dignitaries of the Order, who were more crafty than Ulryk, and knew Witold, endeavored to gain him over to their side by means of presents and adulation. They had recourse to all such measures, the like of which we find to have only existed in the time of

the Cæsars of Rome, when sanctuaries and altars were erected to their honor in their lifetime.

The ambassadors of the Knights of the Cross whilst making obeisance to Yaghello's representative, said :

"There are two benefactors of the Order. The first is God, the second is Witold. Therefore every word and favor of Witold to the Knights of the Cross is sacred."

They entreated him to mediate in the affair of Drezdenko, with that object in view, that Witold's advice to the king would cause offence and their friendship would be broken off, if not forever, at least for a long while to come. But the noble counsellors were aware of everything that was going on at Malborg. The king, therefore, had also chosen Witold as mediator.

The Order regretted that choice. The dignitaries among the Knights of the Cross who thought that they knew the character of the great prince, did not know him well enough. Witold not only adjudicated Drezdenko to Poland, but he understood and guessed what was coming. He again caused Zmudz to rise, and his face had more and more assumed a terrible look against the Order, and he began to provide himself with people, arms and cereals, which were sent to his aid from the fruitful lands of Poland.

When that came to pass, everybody throughout the land of the great empire understood that the decisive hour had at last struck.

Once when old Macko, Zbyszko and Jagienka were sitting in front of the gate of the castle at Bogdaniec, enjoying the delicious air and warm weather, a stranger suddenly appeared upon a

foaming steed. He laid something which looked like a garland wreathed of osier and willow at the feet of the knight, shouting: "Wici! wici!" (To arms!), and then pushed on.

They both sprang up in great excitement. Macko's face assumed a solemn and threatening appearance. Zbyszko hastened and ordered the herald onward with his call to arms. Then he turned, his eyes flashing, and cried:

"War! God has finally granted it! War!"

"And such a war that one like it we have never before experienced," Macko gravely added.

Then he shouted to the servants, who in the twinkling of an eye gathered around their masters:

"Blow the horns from the top of the watch-tower to the four corners of the world, and let others run to the villages and summon the chiefs. Bring the horses from the stables; hitch the wagons! as fast as you can!"

His voice had not yet ceased when the servants hurried in all directions, ready to execute his orders, which was not difficult, as everything was in readiness for some time past. Men, horses, arms and stores were ready. One had only to mount and move on. But before starting, Zbyszko inquired of Macko:

"Are you not going to remain at home?"

"I? What has entered into your head?"

"According to law you can stay at home; because one of yours having been sent instead of you, there would be one to take care of Jagienka and the children."

"Well, then, listen. I have waited until old age for this hour."

It was quite enough to judge from his cold and

determined looks that nothing could persuade him from going. Besides, notwithstanding his seventh cross X (seventy years of age), he was still as hale as an oak, his limbs moved in their joints with ease, and the axe almost groaned in his grasp. Whilst it was true that when fully armored he could no longer jump upon his horse without the stirrup, yet many a younger man, especially among the western knights, could not do it. But instead of that he possessed great knightly dexterity, and there was none in the whole neighborhood to equal him in experience.

It was obvious that Jagienka was also not afraid to remain at home, for, when she heard her husband's words she came and kissed his hand and said :

"Do not worry about me, beloved Zbyszko, the castle is comfortable ; and you also know that I am not too timid here, and neither the crossbow nor spear are strange to me. This is not the time to think about us when it is necessary to save the kingdom. God will watch here over us."

Then her eyes suddenly filled with tears which flowed down in big drops upon her wonderful lily-white face. Then when the children appeared in a group, she continued in a trembling voice, as follows :

"Hey ! Were it not for these dear little worms I should lie at your feet until you consented to take me with you to the war."

"Jagienka darling !" exclaimed Zbyszko, grasping her in his arms.

She too embraced him around the neck, and with all her strength pressed herself to him and endearingly repeated :



"I only wish that you may return to me, my gold, my only one, my most beloved!"

"But you must thank God daily for having given to you such a wife!" added Macko, in a husky voice.

About an hour later, the flag was lowered from the watch-tower, as a sign that the masters were absent. Zbyszko and Macko consented that Jagienka and the children should accompany them as far as Sieradz. Then, after an abundant repast, all the people and the whole train of wagons, started on their journey.

It was a bright and quiet day. There was no wind, and the trees in the forest were motionless. The herds and flocks upon the hillocks and dales also enjoyed their noonday rest—lazily chewing the cud and looking as though they too were absorbed in thought. But owing to the drought, masses of golden colored dust were seen here and there rising upon the road; and above those masses untold diminutive fires sparkling in the sun. Zbyszko called his wife's and children's attention to it.

"Do you know what those shining flames are? They are the heads of the spears and darts. The heralds summoning to war seem to have reached everywhere, and the people are all marching against the Germans."

Accordingly, they met Jagienka's brother in the neighborhood of Bogdaniec. Young Jasko the wealthy heir of Zgorzelice, marched with three lancers and had with him twenty people. Further on, at the crossway, the shaggy head of Cztan of Rogowa emerged from the dust cloud. He in reality was no friend of the Bogdaniec people, but now he shouted from a distance, "Forward,

against the dog-brothers." Then he bowed, wished them well and again disappeared in the grey cloud of dust. They also met old Wilk of Brzozowa. His head was already shaking somewhat from old age, but he too went so that he might avenge the death of his son whom the Germans had killed in Silesia.

The nearer they approached Sieradz, the thicker became the dust clouds. And when the towers of the place were observed from a distance, the whole road swarmed with chiefs and armed soldiers, all streaming to the place of meeting. Seeing that multitudes, composed of hale and strong men determined for war, ready to undergo hardship, inclement weather, cold, and all kinds of trouble, old Macko was encouraged, for it foreboded to him sure victory.

## CHAPTER V.

FINALLY the war broke out; at first the battles were few, and were not very favorable to the Poles. Before the Polish army arrived, the Knights of the Cross had conquered Bobrownek; and razed to the ground Zlotorja, and again occupied the unfortunate Dobrzyn, which lands had been only a short time before acquired. But the Bohemian and Hungarian mediation quieted for a time the war storm; a truce followed during which the Bohemian King Waclaw was to arbitrate between the Poles and the Order.

Nevertheless they did not cease gathering together an army during the winter and spring months. But when the bribed Bohemian king had given his verdict in favor of the Order, war was bound to be renewed.

Meanwhile summer arrived and with it the "Nations" marched under Witold. When they crossed the river near Czerwiensk, both armies and the regiments of the Mazovian prince joined. On the other side one hundred thousand armor-clad Germans were arrayed near Swiec. The king intended to cross the Drewenz, and take the short route to Malborg. But as the crossing was impracticable, he turned from Kurzentnik toward Dzialdowa, and after they had destroyed the fortress of the Knights of the Cross, Dombrowna, or Gilgenburg, there he joined the camp.

He, as well as the Polish and Lithuanian dignitaries, knew that a great battle must be fought

within a short time, but nobody suspected that it would come before several days. It was admitted that the grand master in pushing on along the royal highway would wish to rest his troops so that they might be fresh for the coming mortal combat. Meanwhile the Polish army bivouacked and remained over night at Dombrowna. Although that fortress was taken without orders, yea, it was even against the military council, nevertheless the hearts of the king of Witold were filled with hope, because that castle was well fortified and surrounded by lakes and thick walls and numerous defenders. Yet, the Polish knights stormed and took it almost in the twinkling of an eye, with such irresistible enthusiasm, that before the whole army reached the place, nothing remained of the town and fortress but smoking ruins and piles, in the midst of which the fierce fighters of Witold and the Tartars under Saladin, cut down the last Germans, who desperately defended themselves. However the fire did not last long. It was quickly extinguished by a short but heavy shower.

The whole night of the fourteenth of July was a remarkably changeable and tempestuous one; there was a continuation of squalls. Owing to terrible lightning, the sky looked aflame, and terrible thunder came from the east and west. The frequent lightning filled the air with an odor of sulphur. Then the noise of the downpouring rain deafened all other noises. Then the wind dispersed the clouds, and between the rifts, appeared the stars and bright moon. It was not long before midnight that it quieted down somewhat, so that they were able to light the fires, so that at that moment, thousands upon thousands of

fires were kindled by the immense Polish Lithuanian army. The troopers dried their wet garments and sang war songs.

The king was also awake, because the house where he had sheltered himself during the storm was at the very edge of the camp. It was there that a council of war was being held, considering the taking of Gilgenburg. And as the contingent of Sieradz had taken part in the attack upon the town, the leader, Jacob of Koniecpole, and others, were summoned to give reason why they had attacked the place without superior orders, notwithstanding the fact that the king himself sent this doorkeeper and some of his attendants to keep them away from the attack.

Owing to that, the woyewoda was not sure whether he could escape censure, yea even punishment; he brought with him about a dozen of the foremost knights, old Macko and Zbyszko among them, to testify that when the king's officer had arrived it was already too late, as they were already upon the walls of the castle and at a critical moment when they were engaged in a most stubborn battle with the garrison. And, as to his attack upon the fortress, "It was difficult to get information of everything," he explained, "since the army extended for several miles. Having been dispatched to the front, he thought it to be his duty to crush all opposition to the army and strike the enemy wherever he was to be found." When the king, Prince Witold and the noblemen who were glad in their hearts at that event, heard those words, not only did they not censure the Woyewodas of Sieradz and his followers, for their conduct, but even praised them for their prowess in conquering

the fortress and subduing the strong garrison in so short a time. Macko and Zbyszko had then an opportunity to see the greatest heads of the kingdom. For besides the king and the princes of Mazowsze, there were present the two leaders of all the armies. Witold, led the hosts at Lithuania, Zmudz, Rus, Besabia, Wolachia and the Tartars; and Zyndram of Maszkowice, whose escutcheon had the device at "Tego samego co slouce" (the same as the sun), the sword-bearer of Krakow, the chief leader of the Polish army;—the most supreme authority among all who knew the affairs of war. Besides these, there were present at that council the greatest warriors and strategists. Krystyn of Ostrowa, the Castellan of Krakow, Jasko of Tarnowa, the Woyewoda of Krakow, etc.; and finally Ziemowit, son of Princess Ziemowit of Plock; he was the youngest among them but a great warrior, whose opinion the great king himself prized.

They waited in that spacious room so as to be on hand, and in case of inquiry to be able to give their advice. Macko and Zbyszko also perceived the greatest knights whose fame resounded far and wide in Poland and abroad. Zawisza Czarny, Sulimeczyk and his brother, Skarbka Abdank of Gor, Dobka of Olesznica, famous for his having once at a tournament in Thorn unhorsed twelve German knights; and the gigantic Paszko Zlodziej of Biskupice, and Powala of Taczew, who was their well-wishing friend; and Krzon of Kozichlow; Marcin of Wrocimswice, the bearer of the grand standard of the whole kingdom; Floryan Jelitzkyk at Korytnice, and the terrible hand-to-hand fighter, Lis of Targowisk and Staszek of Skarbimowic who,

fully-armored, could jump across two good-sized horses.

There were many more renowned knights, from Mazowsze and various other countries who marched in front of the standard. Those were called "men in front of the banners," because in fight they stood in the first line. But the friends and acquaintances, especially Powala, were happy to salute Macko and Zbyszko, with whom they conversed concerning the time past and old adventures.

"Hey!" said the Lord of Taczew to Zbyszko. "You have a large account to settle with the Knights of the Cross. But I hope that you will settle it now for all time."

"I shall pay all even if I have to do it with my blood," replied Zbyszko.

"Do you know that your Kuno Lichtenstein is now the grand *comthur*?" asked Paszko Zlodziej of Biskupice.

"I know it and so does my uncle."

"May God grant me to meet him," interrupted Macko, "for I have a personal affair with him."

"Bah! We too challenged him," replied Powala. "But he replied that the Order does not permit him to fight. Well, perhaps it will permit him now."

But Zawisza who always spoke with great gravity said:

"He will it be whom God shall appoint."

But Zbyszko, out of curiosity, introduced the affair of his uncle before Zawisza, and he asked whether the vow to fight Kuno Lichtenstein had not been fulfilled when Macko fought Lichtenstein's relative instead, and killed him. All exclaimed that it was enough. But the stubborn

Macko, although glad in his heart of the verdict, said :

“ But, I should be surer of salvation if I had fought Kuno himself.”

Then they talked about the capture of Gilgenburg, and of the approaching great battle, for the master could do nothing else but try to stop the progress of the king's army.

When they were racking their brains as to the exact day when the battle would take place, a tall lanky knight approached them. He was dressed in red cloth and his cap was of the same material, and crossing his hands he said in a gentle, almost feminine voice :

“ I salute you, Knight Zbyszko of Bogdaniec.”

“ De Lorche! ” shouted Zbyszko, “ you are here! ”

Then he embraced him because he remembered and was thankful of de Lorche's good services in the past. When they had kissed each other like most intimate friends, Zbyszko was glad and began to ask him :

“ So you are here and on our side? ”

“ There may be many knights from Gelderland fighting on the other side,” replied de Lorche. “ But I owe my services from Dlugolas to my master, Prince Janusz.

“ Then, you became the proprietor of Dlugolas after old Mikolaj (Nicolas).”

“ Yes! Because after Mikolaj died, and his son was killed at Bobrownik, Dlugolas became the property of the wonderful Jagienka, who five years ago became my wife and lady.”

“ For God's sake! ” exclaimed Zbyszko, “ tell me how all that came to pass? ”



But de Lorche, greeting old Macko, said :

"Your old armor-bearer, Glowacz told me that I should find you here ; he is now waiting for us in the tent, and is looking after the supper. The tent is quite a distance from here ; it is at the other end of the camp, but on horseback we can soon reach it. Let us therefore mount our horses, and come with me."

Then he turned toward Powala, whom he had known long ago at Plock, and added :

"And you also, noble lord. I shall feel greatly honored."

"Well!" replied Powala, "I like to talk with acquaintances ; at the same time we shall have an opportunity to see the army along the road."

Then they left and were about to mount their horses when one of de Lorche's servants put upon his arm a rain coat which he purposely brought for his master. This servant approached Zbyszko, kissed his hand and said :

"I kneel and worship you, sir. I was once your servant. You do not recognize me because it is dark. Do you remember Sanderus?"

"For God's sake!" exclaimed Zbyszko.

And for a moment the memory of his past troubles and sorrows revived in his mind, in the same manner as when he met his old armor-bearer, Hlawa, a couple of weeks before this had happened, after a long absence.

Therefore he said :

"Sanderus! Ay! I do remember you and the old times. What have you been doing during all this time, and where were you? Do you deal no more in relics?"

"No, sir! I have been the sexton at the church of

Dlugolas down to last spring. But as my lamented father occupied himself with the military profession, therefore as soon as war had broken out I immediately got tired of church-bell metal and felt a desire for iron and steel."

"What do I hear!" exclaimed Zbyszko, as though he were unable to imagine Sanderus standing before him, armed with sword, javelin or axe ready for battle.

But Sanderus, holding his stirrups, said :

"I went this year with orders from the bishop of Plock to Prussia, where I have rendered considerable service. But I shall tell you later on about it. Now let your highness mount the horse because that Bohemian count, whom you call Hlawa, is waiting for you with supper in the tent of my master."

Then Zbyszko mounted his horse and approaching Pan de Lorche, rode at his side so that they could converse without hindrance, for he was curious to learn from him his adventures.

"I am very glad," he said, "that you joined our side. But I am surprised, because you served under the Knights of the Cross."

"Those who take pay, serve," replied de Lorche. "But as I had taken no pay, I did not serve. I came among the Knights of the Cross with the sole object in view of looking for adventure and obtaining the knightly belt, which, as you know, I have obtained from the hands of the Polish prince. Then having remained long years in these countries, I have learned who is in the right. Then in the course of time I got married and settled down here. How was it possible for me to join the other side and fight against you? I am already a citizen of

this country, and observe how fluently I speak your own language. Bah! I have already forgotten some of my own tongue."

"Is not your property in Gelderland? I heard that you are related to the rulers of that country, and you are the proprietor of many castles and estates."

"I have ceded my estates to my relative Fulkon de Lorche, who paid me for them. I visited Gelderland five years ago, and I brought from that place great wealth with which I have bought estates in Mazowsze."

"How did it happen that you married Jagienka of Dlugolas?"

"Ah!" replied de Lorche. "Who is able to fathom woman's heart? Our courtship dragged on until I thought I had enough of it, when I declared to her that I was in despair and ready to go to the war in Asia and never return. She suddenly burst in tears and said: 'Then I shall become a nun.' I knelt at her feet, and two weeks later we were married, and the bishop of Plock blessed us in church."

"But have you children?" asked Zbyszko.

"After the war, Jagienka will go to the tomb of your queen, Jadwiga, and beg her for a blessing," replied de Lorche with a sigh.

"Well, that is a sure remedy. They say in such matters there is not a better patroness than our saintly queen. There will be a great battle fought within a few days, then there will be peace."

"Yes."

"But the Knights of the Cross surely look upon you as a traitor?"

"No!" said de Lorche. "You know how much

I observe knightly honor. Sanderus left with orders from the Bishop of Plock to Malborg. Through him I sent a letter to the grand master, Ulryk. In that letter I sent my resignation and explained to him my reasons for joining your side."

"Ha! Sanderus!" called Zbyszko. "He told me that he got tired of bell metal, and that he took a fancy for iron; that surprises me, because he always possessed the heart of a hare."

"Sanderus has so much to do with iron and steel," replied de Lorche, "that he shaves me and my armor-bearers."

"Is that so?" inquired Zbyszko merrily.

They rode for some time in silence, then de Lorche looked heavenward and said:

"I have invited you to supper, but it seems we shall arrive in time for breakfast."

"The moon is still shining," replied Zbyszko. "Let us proceed."

They had now overtaken Macko and Powala. These four proceeded together upon the main road, leading through the camp, which was always traced out by order of the leaders among the tents and camp-fires in order to have the passage free from obstacles. To reach the encampment of the Mazowsze contingent, they had to traverse the whole length of the road.

"As Poland is Poland," observed Macko, "it has never seen such an army, because the people from all the countries of the realm have flocked together."

"No other king could get such an army," said de Lorche, "because none could manage such a powerful state."

But the old knight turned toward Powala of Taczew,

"How many standards, did you say, sir, come with Prince Witold?"

"Forty," replied Powala. "Ours, the Polish and Mazurs together make fifty. But they are not as well dressed as those with Witold. Because under him several thousand people serve under one sign. Ha! We heard that the master said that these ragamuffins are better adapted to the soup ladle than to the sword. God grant that those words were spoken in an evil hour. But I am of opinion that the Lithuanian axes will be deeply steeped in the gore of the Knights of the Cross."

"Who are these through whom we are passing now?" inquired de Lorche.

"These are Tartars, whom Saladin, the vassal of Witold, has brought with him."

"Are they good warriors?"

"The Lithuanians fought them and destroyed a considerable number of them; that is the reason they are obliged to be here. But the western knights are no match for them, because the Tartars are more terrible in flight than in encounter."

"Let us observe them from a short distance," said de Lorche.

They advanced toward the camp-fires, which were surrounded by people whose arms were entirely bare. In spite of the summer season they were dressed in long sheepskin coats with the wool outside. Most of them simply slept upon the bare ground or upon damp steaming straw. But many crouched upon their heels in front of the burning wood-piles. Some tried to shorten the long night hours by chanting wild songs through their noses and striking one horse shankbone against another, which produced a peculiar and disagreeable rattle

by which they accompanied their songs; others had little drums or were striking upon the strung bow-strings. Others were eating pieces of bloody steaming meat which they had just snatched from the fire, blowing on it with their blue protruding lips. Altogether they had a wild and uncanny appearance; it was easier to take them for some terrible monsters of the forest than for human creatures.

The smoke of the fires produced a pungent odor from the roasted fat of the horse flesh and mutton which dripped into the flames. The bad smell proceeding from burned hair and heated sheepskin coats, raw hides and blood, was simply unendurable and nauseating. From the other dark side of the street where the horses were stationed, the foul stable stench was wafted across. Several hundred of those hacks that were kept for reconnoitring purposes, cropped the grass from underfoot, biting each other and whinnying. The hostlers quieted the strife by their voices and hide whips.

It was unsafe to penetrate in their midst alone because they were a savage and rapacious wild horde. Close behind them were the less savage legions of the Bessarabians, with horns on their heads; and long-haired Walachians, instead of coats of mail they wore boards upon their chests and backs, upon which grotesque pictures of vampires, skeletons and beasts were painted. Behind these were the Serbs; they were asleep now, but their halt at daytime resounded like one gigantic lute. For there were a great number of flute, balabaika, bagpipe and various other instrument players among them.

The camp-fires flashed, and from the sky, between the clouds which the strong wind dispersed, shone

the great bright moon, which light enabled our knights to inspect the camp. Beyond the Serbs were the unfortunate Zmudzians. The Germans caused rivers of blood to flow from them, yet at every summons from Prince Witold they always hastened to join in new battles, and now as if with a foreboding that their troubles would soon be ended once for all, they marched here with a determined spirit under that leader, Skirwoillo, whose very name caused the Germans to be seized with terror and madness.

The fires of the Zmudzians were quite near those of the Lithuanians, for they were akin to each other; they spoke the same language and had the same customs.

But at the entrance of the Lithuanian camp the Polish knights saw a gloomy picture. There upon gallows constructed of logs, were hanging two corpses, forcibly swaying by the wind, turning and twisting that caused the timber of the gallows to produce a mournful, squeaking noise. At that ghastly sight, the horses snorted and reared and the knights crossed themselves; and, when they had passed, Powala said:

"I was present when Prince Witold was with the king and these criminals were brought in. Our bishops and nobles had complained that Lithuania is too cruel in war, and does not even spare churches, so that when they were brought in (they were important personages, and apparently they were accused of desecration of the Most Holy Sacrament) the prince flew into such a rage that it was a terror to look at him, and he commanded them to hang themselves. The unfortunate men were obliged to construct the gallows and hang them-

selves. And what is more, they urged on one another thus: 'Be quick! or the prince will be more angry!' Terror fell upon all the Tartars and Lithuanians, because the criminals feared the king's anger more than death."

"Yes, I remember," said Zbyszko, "that time when I was in Krakow, the king was very angry with me about Lichtenstein. Then young Prince Jamont, the king's attendant, advised me to hang myself forthwith, and that advice was given in kindness of heart. Although I should have challenged him for it to mortal combat, were it not, as you know, that they were going to cut my head off anyhow."

"Prince Jamont has already learned knightly customs," replied Powala.

While conversing, they passed the Lithuanian camp and three fine Russian regiments, the most numerous of which was that of Smolensk. Then they went to the Polish camp. There were fifty regiments; they were the kernel and the best of all the army. Here their arms were of a better quality and their horses larger, and the knights very well exercised. None of the armies coming from the west could surpass them in anything, whether in strength of limb, or in enduring hunger, cold and fatigue. Even the proprietors of great and little Poland surpassed those coming from the west, who were more mindful of their own comfort. The customs and manners of the Poles were more simple: their coats of mail were thicker, but better tempered, and their contempt for death and their perseverance in battle had in the past time and again astonished those knights who came from distant England and France,



De Lorche, who knew the Polish Knighthood from long ago, added :

“ Here is the whole strength and hope. I remember how the knights at Marienburg complained more than once, that in battle with you, every span of ground must be purchased with rivers of blood.”

“ I also say that now blood will flow,” replied Macko. “ For the Order has never before collected such forces.”

But Powala remarked :

“ Knight Korzbog, whom the king dispatched with letters to the grand master, told us what the Knights of the Cross said : ‘ That neither the Roman emperor, nor any king had such a force, and that the Order could subdue all kingdoms.’ ”

“ Yes! but we are more numerous,” said Zbyszko.

“ Ay, but they think very lightly of Witold’s forces, which are armed imperfectly and would be crushed at the first charge like an earthen vessel under a hammer. If that assertion is true or not, I do not know.”

“ It is both true and not true! ” replied the discreet Macko. “ Zbyszko and I, know them because we fought side by side with them. True that their arms are worse and their horses are jaded nags; for that reason it often happens that they are crushed at the onslaught by the Knights of the Order, but they possess stout hearts and are more manly than the Germans.”

“ That we shall soon see,” replied Powala. “ The king is constantly shedding tears that so much Christian blood will flow. Even at the last moment he would be willing to conclude an honorable peace. But the pride of the Order would not admit it.”

“ As I live! I know the Knights and all of us

know them," said Macko. "God has already arranged the scales upon which He will put our blood and that of the enemy of our race."

They were already near the Mazowsze hosts, in the midst of which the tents of de Lorche were pitched, when they observed a large group of persons crowding in the middle of the "street" and looking at the sky.

"Stop there! Stop!" shouted some one from the midst of the crowd.

"Who is speaking and what are you doing here?" asked Powala.

"I am the parish priest of Klobuko. But who are you?"

"Powala of Taczew, the knights of Bogdaniec and de Lorche."

"Ah! that is you, sir," said the priest in a mysterious voice and approaching Powala's horse. "Only look at the moon and observe what is being formed there. It is an ominous and wonderful night."

Then the knights raised their heads and looked toward the moon which had already paled and was near the setting.

"I discern nothing," said Powala. "But what do you see there?"

"A cowed monk wrestling with a crowned king. Look, O, there! In the name of the Father and Son and the Holy Ghost! Oh, how terribly they try to overpower one another. . . . God be merciful to us sinners!"

Silence reigned round about, for all held their breath.

"Look! look!" exclaimed the priest.

"True, there is something like it," said Macko.

"True, true!" confirmed others.

“Ha! The king has thrown down the monk,” suddenly shouted the priest of Klobuko. “He has set his foot upon him! Praised be Jesus Christ.”

“Forever and ever!”

At that moment a big cloud covered the moon, and the night became darkened, only the shining blood-colored tongues of flames of the camp-fires kept on leaping across the road.

The knights moved forward, and when they were clear of the crowd, Powala asked:

“Did you see anything?”

“At first I saw nothing,” replied Macko. “But later on I saw distinctly the king and the monk.”

“And I.”

“And I.”

“It is a sign from God,” said Powala. “Ha! It appears that in spite of the king’s tears, there will be no peace.”

“And it will be such a battle as has not been in the memory of the world,” said Macko.

Then they proceeded on in silence. They were solemn and their hearts were overflowing.

But when they arrived near the tent of de Lorche the whirlwind rose again with such strength, that in a moment, the fires of the Mazovian camp were scattered so that the air was filled with thousands of firebrands, cinders and sparks, and at the same time enveloping it in thick masses of smoke.

“Hey! It is blowing terribly,” said Zbyszko, throwing back his cloak which the wind had cast over his head.

And in the midst of the storm human voices like groanings and weepings were heard.

“It will soon dawn, but nobody knows what the day will bring,” added de Lorche.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE storm not only did not cease in the morning but even increased in force,—so much so that they could not pitch the tent in which the king was accustomed, from the very beginning of the expedition, to hear holy mass, three times daily. Finally Prince Witold came galloping, with petitions and begging, owing to the season, that the services should be holden in a sheltered part of the forest, so as not to delay the march. His wishes were granted, for it could not be otherwise.

At sunrise the troops moved in a body, and behind them a vast convoy of wagons. After an hour's march the wind subsided so much that it was possible to unfurl the standards. And as far as the eye could reach, the field looked as if covered with a hundred colored flowers. No eye could embrace all the hosts and the forest of the different ensigns under which the regiments were moving forward. The Krakowians marched under a red standard with a white crowned eagle. It was the principal banner of the whole kingdom, the great sign for the whole army. It was borne by Marcin of Wrocimovic, a mighty and famous knight, whose coat of arms was Polkozy (half a goat). Behind it marched squads of the household guards. One of them held the Lithuanian double cross above him. Another carried pod *Pogonia*.<sup>1</sup> But under the sign of St. Jerzey marched a powerful host composed of

<sup>1</sup>The arms of Lithuania, a galloping horse with rider holding his sword ready to strike.

foreign mercenaries and volunteers, most of them coming from Bohemia and Moravia.

The volunteers were numerous since the whole forty-ninth regiment was entirely made up of them. Those men were principally enrolled in the infantry who marched behind the lancers; they were wild and insubordinate, but so trained for war and furious that when fighting with other infantry, their antagonists fled from them as fast as a dog flees from a porcupine.

Their weapons were scythes, axes, and especially iron flails which they simply wielded in a terrific manner. They joined anybody who paid, because their only element was war, rapine and carnage.

Near the Moravian and Bohemian contingents marched under their own standards sixteen regiments from the Polish provinces, one from Przemyśl, another from Lwów (Lemberg), one from Galicia and three from Podolia; and behind them marched the infantry of those provinces, powerfully armed with pikes and scythes. The Mazowsze princes, Janusz and Ziemowit led the twenty-first, twenty-second and twenty-third regiments. The bishops' and nobles' regiments, twenty-two in number, marched near them. Then marched Jasko of Tarnowa, Jendrek of Tenczyn, Spytko Leliwa, Krzon of Ostrowa, Mikolaj of Michalowa, Zbigniew of Brzezia, Krzon of Kozichlow, Kuba of Koniecpole, Jasko of Ligenza, and the Kmitas and Zaklikas. Besides those were the Grifit, Bobowski and the Kozli Rogi families and various others who congregated and placed themselves under a common herbal symbol and all in common shouted the battle cry at the summons to arms.

And the land under them blossomed as a meadow in springtime—a billowy sea of horses, and men, and above them a forest of pikes with multi-colored bannerets, having the appearance of so many little flowers; behind them, in clouds of dust, marched the town and peasant infantry. They were aware that they were marching to a terrible battle, but they also knew that it was “necessary.” They therefore went to it with a willing heart.

Upon the right wing advanced Witold’s legions, under banners of various colors, but with the same Lithuanian escutcheon, (a galloping horseman with sword ready to strike). No eye could take in all the legions, because they marched through field and forest for a width of about five miles.

Before midday the army arrived in the vicinity of the villages of Logdau and Tannenberg; they halted at the outskirts of the forest. The place seemed to be well adapted for rest and secure from all sudden surprise. For on the left side the army was protected by Lake Dombrowna, and the right by Lake Lubien. In front of them was an open field about five miles in width. In the midst of that stretch, the land rose gently toward the west, upon which the green bogs of Grünwald were situated; and a little farther were the grey straw roofs of the forlorn and barren fields of Tannenberg. The enemy, who could approach the forest from the elevated ground could be easily discerned. But they were not expected before the following day. Therefore the army stopped only to rest. However Zyndram of Maszkow who was experienced in matters of war, even in marching, observed war-

like order ; therefore the army was so posted as to be ready for an attack at any moment. At his command scouts upon swift horses were sent forward at once toward Grünwald and Tannenberg and farther, to reconnoitre the neighborhood. At the same time they pitched the chapel tent, so that the king might perform his usual divine worship. They pitched the chapel tent upon the elevated shore of Lake Lubien, so that the king, who longed for divine worship, might hear his usual masses.

Jagiello, Witold, the Mazovian princes and the council of war entered the tent. In front of it assembled the chief knights, for the double purpose of committing themselves to God before the terrible day as well as seeing the king. They saw him as he went in grey campaign garb, with serious face, upon which deep care was distinctly marked. Age had little changed his figure ; neither had it covered his face with wrinkles, nor even whitened his hair, which he even now placed as dexterously behind his ears as he did then when Zbyszko had seen him for the first time at Krakow. But now he walked as if bowed down under the terrible burden of the responsibility which weighed so heavily upon his shoulders, and as if he were plunged in great sorrow. In the army, they were telling each other that the king was constantly weeping because of the Christian blood which was to be shed. And it was really so. Jagiello shuddered at the idea of going to war, especially against people who had the cross on their mantles and standards ; and he thirsted for peace from the very depths of his soul. In vain had the Polish nobles, even the Hungarian mediators, Scibor and Gara, presented to him the

pride and confidence of the Knights of the Cross which filled the Grand Master Ulryk, who was ready to challenge the whole world to battle. In vain did his own ambassador to the Order, Piotr Korzbog, swear on the Lord's Cross and upon the emblematic fishes of his escutcheon, that the Order would not even hear of peace, and that the only one who was inclined toward it, the Count von Wende, was ridiculed and reproached. Still he (the king) hoped that the enemy would recognize the justice of his desire: to spare human blood and terminate the terrible dispute with a just arrangement.

Even now he went to pray for this in the chapel tent, because his simple and benignant soul was tormented with dread. Jagiello had formerly visited the lands of the Knights of the Cross with fire and steel, but he did that when he was a Pagan Lithuanian prince; but now, as king of Poland and a Christian, he saw burning villages, pyres, blood and tears, and the fear of the Lord's anger had taken hold of him, especially as that was only the beginning of war. If only it might cease even now! But even to-day or to-morrow nations were about to destroy each other, and the earth would be soaked with blood. It is true that the foe was unjust, but then he bore the cross on his mantle and was protected by such great and sacred relics that the mind turned away from them terrified. The whole army did not fear spears, nor swords and axes, as much as they feared those holy relics. "How then dare we lift up a hand against the grand master?" Such were the words of fearless knights. "If he bears a reliquary on his armor and in it are the holy bones of saints and wood of the cross of our Saviour."



Witold was actually burning for war, he pushed and hastened on to battle. But the pious heart of the king quite failed at the thought of those heavenly powers with which the Order had protected its wickedness.

## CHAPTER VII.

FATHER BARTOSZ of Klobuko had finished one mass, and Father Jarosz of Kalisko was about to begin a second, and the king had gone out in front of the tent so as to stretch his limbs that were slightly cramped with kneeling, when Hanko Ostojczyk, a nobleman, galloped up, like a whirlwind on a foaming horse, and before dismounting, shouted:

“Gracious Lord! The Germans are coming.”

At these words the knights were startled and the king's face changed. He remained silent for a moment and then exclaimed:

“Praised be Jesus Christ. Where did you see them, and how many standards? (regiments.)”

“I saw one regiment near Grünwald,” replied Hanko in a panting voice. “But beyond the heights dust is rising, as if more of them were coming!”

“Praised be Jesus Christ,” the king repeated.

Then Witold, whose blood had rushed to his face and his eyes began to burn like glowing coals at the first words of Hanko, turned to the courtiers and exclaimed:

“Countermand the second mass, and bring me a horse.”

But the king placed his hand upon Witold's shoulders and said:

“Brother, you go, but I shall stay here to hear the second mass.”

But just at the moment when Prince Witold and

Zyndram mounted their horses and turned toward the camp, a second noble courier, Piotr (Peter) Oksza of Wlostowa, came rushing up shouting, from a distance :

“The Germans! The Germans! I have seen two regiments.”

“Mount your horses!” called some courtiers and knights.

Piotr had not yet ceased talking when the clatter of horses' hoofs was heard again, and then a third courier, then a fourth, fifth and sixth. All of them had seen German standards advancing and their numbers constantly increasing. There was no more doubt that the whole army of the Knights of the Cross was barring the way of the king's forces.

The knights dispersed, each one to his own standard. At the chapel tent there remained only a handful of courtiers, priests and servants with the king. But at that moment the sound of a small bell was heard; that was a sign that Father Kalisko was beginning the second mass. Therefore, Jagiello stretched out his arms and crossed his hands in worship, with his eyes lifted up toward heaven and entered the tent with light step.

\* \* \* \* \*

But when the king went out again in front of his tent, after the mass was finished, he was able to see with his own eyes, and was convinced that the couriers had spoken the truth, because on the distant elevated borders of the plain, something blackened and looked as if a forest had suddenly sprung up upon the barren fields, and above that forest a rainbow of colored flags played and changed in the rays of the sun. Far beyond that, toward Grün-

wald, and Tannenberg a gigantic dust cloud was rising toward the sky. The king embraced that whole threatening horizon at a glance. Then he turned to the vice-chancellor, Father Mikolaj, and inquired :

“ Who is the patron saint of the day ? ”

“ This is the day of the sending forth of the apostles,” replied the vice-chancellor.

And the king sighed.

“ Then the day of the apostles will be the last day for many thousand Christians, who will destroy each other upon this field.”

And he pointed with his hand toward the broad barren plain, in the middle of which, only half-way from Tannenberg, rose a group of very old oak trees.

Meanwhile they brought him his horse, and from a distance came galloping sixty lancers, which Zyndram of Maszkow sent as a guard to the king's person.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alexander, the youngest son of the Prince of Plock, and brother of that Ziemowit specially adapted to war, and sat in the council of war, led the king's bodyguard.

The second place after him was held by the Lithuanian Zygmunt Korybut, the king's nephew ; he was a youth of great promise and great destinies, but of a restless spirit. Of the most famous knights were : Jasko Manzyk of Dombrowa, a real giant, almost equal in stature to Paszko of Biskupice, and almost as strong as Zawisza Czarny himself ; Zolawa, a Bohemian baron, puny and lean, but of immense dexterity ; he was famous at the Hungarian and Bohemian courts for the duels in

which he had felled to the ground about a dozen Austrian nobles; and Sokol, another Bohemian, an archer above all archers; and Bieniasz Wierusz of Great Poland; and Piotr Medyolauski; and the Lithuanian Bojar Sienko of Pohosta, whose father, Piotr, led one of Smolensk regiments; and Prince Feduszko, a relative of the king; and Prince Jamont. Finally the Polish knights, "selected from among thousands," who had sworn to defend the king with their last drop of blood and to protect him from every adventure in war, and near the king's person, were the vice-chancellor, Father Mikolaj, and his secretary, Zbyszko of Olesnica, a learned youth experienced in the arts of reading and writing, but at the same time very powerful as a wild boar.

Three armor-bearers had cared for the king's arms,—they were: Czajka of Nowy Dwor, Mikolaj of Morawica, and Danilko Rusin, who took charge of the king's bow and quiver. The suite was filled by more than a dozen courtiers, who were mounted on very swift horses, and whose duty was to gallop with dispatches to the armies.

The armor-bearers dressed the king in splendid brilliant armor. Then they brought him, also selected from among thousands, a chestnut-colored charger. It snorted under its steel headgear; that was considered a good omen,<sup>1</sup> and it filled the air with its neighing; it sat a little on its haunches like a bird about to fly.

When the king felt the horse under him, and a spear in his hand, he changed suddenly. Sorrow

<sup>1</sup> It is customary in Poland, specially among the country people, to respond to horses snorting with the word *Zdrow*, meaning health.—Translator.

fled from his countenance. His dark little eyes began to glisten. There was a flush visible on his face, but that only lasted for a moment, for when the clerical vice-chancellor began to bless him with the sign of the cross he became serious again, and humbly inclined his silver-helmeted head.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meanwhile the German army was slowly descending from the elevated plain. It passed Grünwald, it passed Tannenberg, and stopped in complete order of battle in the middle of the field. From below, where the Polish army was situated, that immense compact body of iron armor-clad horses and riders was perfectly visible. Keener eyes could even discern, as far as the waving banners permitted, the various signs embroidered upon the banners, such as crosses, eagles, griffins, swords, helmets, lambs, heads of the aurochs and bears.

Old Macko and Zbyszko, who had fought against the Knights of the Cross before, knew their banners and escutcheons. They pointed out to their Sieradz men two regiments of the grand master which were composed of the very flower and pick of the knighthood, and the principal banner of the whole Order, which was carried by Fryderyk von Wallenrod. And the mighty standard of St. Jerzey, having a red cross on a white field, and a multitude of others belonging to the Order. However, the various signs of the foreign guests were unknown to them. Thousands of the former had flocked from all corners of the world. From *Rakuz* (Austria), Bavaria, Suabia, Switzerland, from famous Burgundy, from rich Flanders, from sunny France, of whom Macko once related that even if they were prostrate upon the ground they still

spoke defiant words; and knights from beyond the sea in England, the cradle of the formidable archers, and even from distant Spain where, from ceaseless contests with the Saracens, manliness and honor flourished more than in all other countries.

At the thought that in a short while they would be obliged to engage in battle with the Germans and all their splendid knighthood, the blood in the veins of the nobility of Sieradz, Koniecpola, Bogdaniec, Rogowa and Brzozowa, as well as of other Polish lands, began to ferment. The faces of the older among them assumed a serious and stern look, because they knew how heavy and terrible was the task before them. Nevertheless, the hearts of the younger ones began to whine like dogs on the leash at the sight of a wild animal in the distance. Therefore, some of them more strongly grasped their spears and the handles of their swords and axes; they reined back their horses upon their haunches, as though preparing to go at a dash. Others breathed quickly as though their coat of mail had become suddenly too tight. However, those among them who were experienced warriors quieted them, saying: "It will not escape you; there will be enough for everybody. God grant that there be not too much."

But the Knights of the Cross, looking down from their elevated position, upon the woodland below, only saw about a dozen Polish regiments on the outskirts of the woods, and they were not altogether sure whether those composed the whole Polish army. It is true that to the left around the lake, grey crowds of warriors were also visible, and among the bushes shining heads of the Lithuanian pikes were visible. But that might only

be a considerable number of Polish scouts. It was not until a dozen or so of refugees from captured Gilgenberg were brought to the grand master, declared that they were satisfied that the whole Polish Lithuanian army were arrayed against them.

But those refugees' account of the Polish strength was in vain. The Grand Master Ulryk did not want to believe it, because, from the very beginning of the war he only credited that which was at his reach and promised certain victory. He neither dispatched scouts nor spies; thinking that whatever the case might be, there must come a mighty battle, and that that fight could not end otherwise than in a frightful rout of the enemy. Trusting in the strength which no previous grand master had hitherto gathered together in the field, he also thought little of his adversary. And when the *comthur* of Gniew, who had investigated the affair privately, told the grand master that Jagiello's forces were more numerous than his own, the grand master replied:

"You call those soldiers! Eh! We shall only have to exert ourselves a little against the Poles; as to the rest, although they are more numerous than we, they are inferior people; they are better with the spoon than with the weapon."

And, pushing on his great forces to battle, he was flushed with great joy; when all of a sudden he found himself in front of the enemy; and when at the sight of the admirable standard of the whole kingdom whose scarlet color was visible outlined upon the dark background of the forest, there was no more ground for doubt that in front of him was pitched the main army.

But the Germans could not attack the Poles in



their present position which was situated in the woods; for the Knights of the Cross were only formidable on the open field, and did not like nor could fight them in thickness of the forest. They therefore gathered for a brief counsel at the side of the grand master for the purpose of finding a means to lure the enemy out of the thickets.

“By St. Jerzey,” exclaimed the grand master. “We have marched about ten miles without resting, and the heat is tormenting, and our bodies are streaming with perspiration beneath our coat of mail. We will not wait here till the enemy makes up his mind to step forth into the field.”

Then Count Wende, a man of considerable age and understanding, said:

“Verily my words have already been ridiculed here, those who ridiculed are such who, God knows, will flee from this field upon which *I* shall die. (Here he glanced at Werner von Tetlingen.) But, at least, I shall speak what my conscience and love for the Order command. The Poles are not in want of heart, but, as I know, the king hopes for messengers of peace till the last.”

Werner von Tetlingen did not reply, but snorted with a scornful smile—but Baron von Wende’s words did not please the grand master; he therefore said:

“There is no time now for us to think of peace! We must take council about another affair.”

“There is always time for God’s affairs,” replied von Wende.

But the fierce *comthur* Henryk of Czluchow, who had sworn to have two naked swords carried in front of him, till he could plunge them in Polish blood, turned his fat face, covered with perspira-

tion, toward the grand master, and shouted with terrible anger :

“ I prefer death to shame. Even if I were alone I should attack with the swords the entire Polish army ! ”

Ulryk’s brow contracted a little.

“ You are speaking in opposition to your duty,” he said.

Then he turned to the *comthurs*, and said :

“ Only take council as to the best means by which we may entice the enemy from the forest.”

Therefore the various *comthurs* gave various counsels ; until finally Gersdorf’s suggestion pleased the *comthurs* and the foremost knightly guests. This was it : To dispatch two heralds to the king with the announcement that the grand master sent him two swords, and challenged the Poles to mortal combat ; but if the field was too small for them to fight, in that case he would withdraw a little with his army in order to suit them.

\* \* \* \* \*

The king had just left the shore of the lake and gone to the left wing of the Polish regiments, where he had to bestow the belt on a whole crowd of knights, when it was suddenly announced to him that two heralds were coming from the army of the Knights of the Cross. The heart of the king beat with hope.

“ They are at last coming with offers of an equitable peace ! ”

“ God grant it ! ” said the clergy.

The king sent for Witold, and meanwhile the heralds slowly approached the camp.

In the bright light of the sun they could be per-

fectly observed; they were mounted upon gigantic war horses covered with housings. One of the heralds had on his shield the black eagle of the emperor upon a golden field; the second, who was the herald of the prince of Szczecin, had upon his shield a griffin upon a white field. The ranks withdrew in front of them. The heralds dismounted and stood for a while in front of the great king, and bowing their heads a little to show obeisance, delivered their message.

“The Grand Master Ulryk,” said the first herald, “challenges your majesty, O lord, and Prince Witold to mortal combat. And in order to arouse the manhood which it appears you are in want of, he sends you these two naked swords.”

Then he placed the swords at the king's feet. Jasko Manryk of Dombrowa translated his words to the king. But scarcely had he finished when the second herald having the griffin upon his shield, approached and spoke as follows:

“The Grand Master Ulryk has commanded me also to acquaint you, O lord! that if you find the field for battle too narrow, he and the soldiers will withdraw so that you and your soldiers may not loiter among the thickets.”

Jasko Manryk again interpreted the second herald's words. Then silence reigned. Only in the king's suite, the knights began to gnash their teeth in silence at such insolence and affronts.

The last hopes of Jagiello vanished like smoke. He expected messengers of peace and good will, but these were the envoys of pride and war. So he raised his tearful eyes and replied as follows:

“We have plenty of swords, but I also accept these as an augury of victory, which God Himself

has conveyed to me by your hands. It is He who will also indicate the battlefield. To His justice I appeal, complaining of the wrongs done to me, and of your injustice and pride. Amen!"

And two great tears flowed down his sunburnt cheeks.

Meanwhile the voices of the knights in the suite began to cry out:

"The Germans are withdrawing. They yield the field!"

The heralds left; and after a while they were seen again riding at the foot of the hill upon their great steeds, and the rays of the sun brilliantly reflecting from the silk stuff which they wore over their armor.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Polish army advanced from the forest and bushes in perfect battle array. In front marched a body which was called *czelny*, "the head," composed of the most terrible knights; behind them came the principal fighters, and behind those the infantry and mercenaries. This mode of march formed two long avenues between the armies, through which Zyndram of Maszkow and Prince Witold galloped to and fro; the latter, in magnificent armor, had no helmet upon his head. He had the appearance of an ill-omened star, or a flame chased forward by the tempest.

The knights drew deep breaths, and settled themselves firmly in their saddles.

The battle was just about to begin.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meanwhile the grand master was observing the king's army, which was emerging from the forest.

He looked long upon its magnitude; he looked

upon the wings, spread out like those of a gigantic bird; he looked upon the rainbow multicolored standards which fluttered in the wind; his heart was suddenly oppressed with an unknown, terrible feeling. It may be that he saw by the eyes of his soul heaps of corpses and rivers of blood. He was not afraid of men, but may be he feared God, who was already holding, in the high heavens above, the balance of victory.

For the first time it struck him, what a horrible day would be ushered in, and he also felt for the first time how great was the responsibility which he had taken upon his shoulders.

So his face became pale, his lips began to twitch, and abundant tears flowed down from his eyes. The *comthurs* looked at the leader with astonishment.

"What is the matter with you, sir?" asked Count von Wende.

"Verily, this is a proper time for tears," quoth the fierce *comthur* of Czluchow.

And the grand *comthur* Kuno von Lichtenstein thrust out his lips and said:

"Master, I reprehend you openly for it; this is the time to encourage the hearts of the knights, but not to weaken them. Truly, we have never seen you so moved before."

But in spite of all endeavors to subdue his emotions, the tears streamed down continually upon his black beard as though some other being was weeping within him.

Finally he checked himself a little and turning his stern eyes on the *comthurs*, he exclaimed:

"To the regiments!"

Then every one started to his own command, for

he (the master) pronounced the order with great emphasis; then he stretched out his hand to his armor-bearer and said:

“ Give me the helmet ! ”

\* \* \* \* \*

Men's hearts in both armies were already beating like hammers. But the bugles had not yet given the sound for battle. A moment of silent expectation, probably more oppressive than the very strife itself, came.

Upon the field, between the Germans and the Polish army in the direction of Tannenberg, rose a clump of very ancient oak trees. The peasants of the neighborhood climbed up them so as to see the fight between the two greatest armies the world had ever seen. But beside that single clump of trees, that whole field was empty, grey, forlorn, and had the appearance of a lifeless steppe. The only thing which moved there, was the wind and above it was death. The eyes of the knights turned in spite of themselves upon that ill-boding, silent plain. The clouds which were fleeting over the sky now and then covered the sun. During those moments the plain had an appearance as if wrapped up in the dark mantle of death.

Then a whirlwind arose which made the forest roar and tore down thousands of leaves, swept the field, and seized the dry blades of grass, and lifted up clouds of dust carrying it into the eyes of the army of the Knights of the Cross. At that very moment the air vibrated with the shrill din of horns, crooked trumpets and whistles and the whole Lithuanian wing rose in the shape of an immense flock of birds ready to fly. According to custom, they started all at once at a gallop. The horses

stretched out their necks and lowered their ears and pushed on with their utmost strength. The riders, flourishing their swords and spears, flew with terrible shouts against the left wing of the Knights of the Cross.

The grand master happened to be there at that very moment. His emotion had already passed. Instead of tears, sparks came from his eyes, and when he saw the expanded Lithuanian forces, he turned to Fryderyk of Wallenrod, the leader of the left wing of the army, and said:

“Witold began first. Then you also begin, in the name of God!”

And with a motion of his right hand he moved fourteen regiments of iron mailed Knights of the Order.

“Gott mit uns!” (God with us!) shouted Wallenrod. The regiments lowered their spears and began to advance slowly, but just as a rock when rolled down from a hill, gathers in strength every moment, whilst it is falling, so also they, from slow step passed into a run, then into a gallop, and advanced at a terrible speed, unchecked like an avalanche which must crush and crumble everything in its path.

The earth groaned and bent under them.

\* \* \* \* \*

As the battle was about to extend at any moment all along the line, therefore the Polish legions began to sing the old war hymn of St. Wojciech. One hundred thousand heads covered with iron turned heavenward; and from one hundred thousand breasts issued one mighty voice, like the thunder of heaven:

Knights of the Cross. 1075

“Mother of God, Virgin,  
Blessed of God, Mary,  
From thy Son, O Lady,  
Mother adored, only Mother,  
Obtain for us, remission of sins! . . .  
Kyrie Eleison!”

And immediately strength entered into their bones and their hearts were ready for death. There was such an immense and conquering power in those voices and in that hymn, as if the thunders from above had begun to roll down in reality. Spears trembled in the hands of the Polish knights, standards and banners quivered, the air vibrated, the branches in the forest moved to and fro, and the awakened echoes of the deep forest began to call as if to repeat to the lakes and dales, and to the length and breadth of the whole land :

“Obtain for us, remission of sins! . . .  
Kyrie Eleison!”

and they continued singing,

“Thy Son, the Crucified, it is the godly time.  
Hear the voices, fill the thoughts of man;  
Hear Thou the prayer, we beg Thee;  
Give us here on earth, pious sojourn,  
After life, dwelling in Paradise.  
Kyrie Eleison!”

The echo repeated in reply :

“Kyrie Eleisoon!”

Meanwhile, on the right wing, a stubborn battle was raging, which approached more and more toward the centre.

The clatter, the squealing of horses, the terrible



shout of the men mingled with the hymn. But at moments voices were silenced, as if breath failed the people yonder. During one of such intervals, it was possible to hear once again the thundering of the voices :

“ Adam, God’s husbandman,  
 Thou dwellest with God forever ;  
 Place us, thy children  
 Where the holy angels reign;  
 There is joy,  
 There is love,  
 There they see the Creator, angelic, forever.  
 Kyrie Eleison! ”

And again the echo responded through the wood :

“ Kyrie Eleisoon! ”

The shouts of the right wing became stronger. But nobody could either see or distinguish what was going on there. For the Grand Master Ulrych who observed the battle from above pushed on at that moment, twenty regiments against the Poles, under the leadership of Lichtenstein.

Zyndram came rushing like a thunderbolt toward the “ front legion ” where the foremost Polish knights were, and pointing with his blade at the approaching cloud-like German host, he shouted so loud that it caused the horses of the first line to rise on their haunches.

“ At them ! Strike. ”

The knights, bending upon the necks of their horses, and stretching their spears in front of them, moved forward.

\*      \*      \*      \*      \*      \*

But the Lithuanians bent under the terrible at-

tack of the Germans. The first ranks which were the best armed and composed of the most powerful bojars, fell flat, like a bridge upon the ground. Those behind them fell furiously upon the Knights of the Cross. But neither courage, nor endurance, nor human power could protect them from defeat and destruction. How else could it be, since on one side fought an army of knights completely clad in steel armor, and on horses equally protected with steel coverings, whilst the Lithuanians on the other side, large and strong forsooth, but with small horses and protected with skins only. Therefore the stubborn Lithuanian tried in vain to reach the German skin. Spears, swords, lances and clubs set with flint or nails rebounded from the iron plates as they would from a rock or from castle walls. The weight of the German men and horses ground down the unhappy followers of Witold. They cut them to pieces with their axes and swords. Their bones were crushed, pierced and trodden down beneath the horses' hoofs. In vain did Prince Witold strive to push through those jaws of death constantly increasing their new legions. In vain did he persist in his effort, rage went for nothing; disregard for death served for nothing, rivers of blood flowed in vain! The Tartars were the first to fly, then the Wallachians and Bessaratiens, and the wall of the Lithuanians soon burst open, and all the fighters were seized with wild panic.

The great majority of the warriors fled toward Lake Lubien and were pursued by the principal German forces, inflicting such terrible havoc, that the whole shore was strewn with dead bodies.

However, the second and smaller part of Witold's

forces, in which were three Smolensk regiments, withdrew toward the Polish wing attacked by six German regiments, and also by those who returned from the pursuit of the Lithuanians. But the Smolensk regiments, being better armed, resisted more effectively. Here the battle changed into a butchery; every step, yea every span of land was bought with rivers of blood. One of the Smolensk regiments was cut down to the last man. The other two defended themselves with rage and desperation. But nothing could check now the victorious Germans. Some of their regiments were seized as if with war madness. Single knights, spurring and rearing their chargers, threw themselves blindly with uplifted axe or sword into the thickest crowd of the enemy. The hewing of their swords and battle-axes was almost superhuman. The whole avalanche pulled, trampled and squeezed the horses and knights of the Smolensk regiments, until they finally reached the side of the Polish front legions. These two regiments who for more than an hour struggled with the Germans, were led by Kuno Lichtenstein.

\*      \*      \*      \*      \*      \*

^ Here the task was not so easy for Kuno's army, because the horses as well as the arms were better, and the knightly discipline of the Poles was of the same character as that of the Order, so that the Germans were thrust aside even by the Polish "wood," especially when at first three terrible Krakow regiments fell upon them: the light cavalry regiment under Jendryk of Brochocic, and the Household guards led by Powala of Taczew. But the battle raged with the greatest noise; when the spears were broken they grasped their swords and

axes. Then shield struck shield, man clasped man, horses fell, standards were upset, helmets burst open under the stroke of the sword and axe. Shoulder pieces and iron coats of mail were covered with blood. They fell from their saddles like severed pine trunks. Those Knights of the Cross who had been at the fight with the Poles near Wilno, knew how "unrelenting" and "impetuous" was that people, but the new men and guests from abroad were at once seized with a wonder akin to fear. More than one also involuntarily reined in his horse, looked ahead in doubt and before he had bethought himself what to do, perished under the weight of the Polish right hand. And just as hail falls mercilessly from bronze-hued clouds on the rye field, so thick fell the terrible blows. And the sword struck, axes struck, scythes struck, and without a moment's pause they struck mercilessly. The sound was like iron plates in a blacksmith's forge. Death extinguished life like a gust of wind; groans issued from the breast; the light of the eye was put out, and the fair-headed youths were plunged into eternal night.

Sparks produced by the stroke of iron flew upward. Splinters of the wooden handles, broken flagstaves, ostrich and peacock feathers and horses' hoofs were all mingled with blood-covered coats of arms and horses' carcasses. Whosoever fell from his horse wounded was trampled to death by the horses' iron-shod feet. But none of the foremost Polish knights had as yet fallen, and they went ahead in close ranks shouting the names of their patron saints or their family war cry. They swept on as fire sweeps the parched prairie, devouring bushes and grass. Lis of Targowisko began first.

He seized Gamarat, the *comthur* of Osterode, who, losing his shield, folded his white mantle and wound it around his arm to protect himself from blows. But Lis cut through the mantle and arm-piece with his sharp sword, and severed the arm from the arm-pit; with another blow of the sword he cut open the stomach with such force that the point rasped against the spinal column. Men screamed with terror at the sight of the death of the leader of the people of Osterode, but Lis threw himself into the midst of them like an eagle among cranes, and when Staszko of Charbimowic, and Domarat of Kobylan rushed to his assistance, that trio began to shell them out terribly, just as bears shell peas from the pods, when they happen to be on a field where early peas are growing.

There Paszko Zlodziej of Biskupice also killed a brother, Kunc Adelsbach. When Kunc saw before him the giant with the bloody axe in his hand upon which was matted, blood-covered hair, he was greatly terrified and decided to give himself up as captive. But owing to the din Paszko could not hear him, and raised himself up in his stirrups and with one stroke cut off his head with its steel helmet with such ease as one might cut an apple in two. Then were extinguished the lives of Loch of Mекlenburg and Klingenstein and the Swabian Helmsdorf, scion of a wealthy noble family; and Limpach of Maguncia (Mayence) and Nachterwitz also of Maguncia, till finally the terrified Germans began to retreat to the right and left before him. But he continued striking at them as at a tottering wall, and at every moment he rose in his saddle ready to strike it was followed by a flash of the axe, then a German helmet was seen falling among the horses.

There too was the mighty Jendryk of Brochocic who had broken his sword upon the head of a knight, upon whose shield was an owl's head, and whose visor also was formed like an owl's head, seized him by the arms, crushed him, and snatching his sword from him killed him with it. He also took the young knight Dynnheim captive, whom he observed without a helmet, and on account of his youthful appearance, spared his life. He was really yet a youth, and Dynnheim stared at him with childish eyes and the Polish knight threw him to his armor-bearer. He was not then aware that that young German knight would later on marry his daughter and forever remain in Poland.

Nevertheless the Germans, greatly enraged, pressed on, wishing to rescue young Dunnheim who was a descendant of a wealthy family of counts near the Rhein, but the line of knights in front: Sumik of Nadbroza, and the two Plomikow brothers and Dobko Okwia, and Zych Pikna pushed them back as a lion pushes back the bull, forcing them to retreat toward the banner at St. Jerzey, causing havoc and ruin among them.

With the knightly guests also fought the royal household regiment. They were led by Ciolek of Zelichow. There Powala of Taczew, possessing superhuman strength, overturned men and horses and crushed iron helmets as if they were egg shells. He smote a whole crowd by himself; and at his side went Leszko of Goraja and another Powala of Wyhucz, and Mscislaw of Skrzynew, and the two Bohemians, Sokol and Zbislawek. Here the struggle lasted long, till upon that single regiment fell three German regiments, but when, with the twenty-seventh regiment, Jasko of Tar-

now came to their assistance the forces were more or less equalized, and the Germans were thrown back as far as half the shot of a crossbow, from the place of the first encounter.

But they were thrown back still further, by the great Krakow regiment which were led by Zyndram himself, and at the head of which in front of the standard was the most terrible warrior of all the Poles, Zawisza Czarny of the Sulima coat-of-arms. At his right fought his brother, Farurej, and Floryan Jelitzek of Korytnicy, and Skarbek of Gor, and that famous Lis of Targowiska and Paszko Zlodziej, and Jan Nelencz, and Stach of Charbimowic. Under the terrible hand of Zawisza perished mighty men. It appeared as though death itself attired in black armor went against them. He fought with furrowed brow and contracted nostrils, calm, attentive as if engaged in common labor. At times he moved his shield regularly and warded off blows, but every flash of his sword was accompanied by a terrible cry of a defeated man. But he did not even look around him; he continued the labor before him like a black cloud from which lightning flashes at every moment.

The Pozen regiment, having as its sign an uncrowned eagle, fought also for life and death. And the archbishop's regiment with the three Mazowsze regiments vied with each other. But all the others also tried to outdo each other in determination and impetuosity. In the Sieradz contingent, Zbyszko of Bogdaniec dashed into the midst of the enemy like a wild boar, and at his side went the terrible old Macko, fighting with deliberation, like a wolf who only bites to kill.

Macko sharply looked everywhere for Lichtenstein, but could see him nowhere among the crowd. Meanwhile he discovered those who had on rich attire. Unfortunate was that knight, who happened to encounter him. Not far from the two knights of Bogdaniec, the ominous Cztan of Rogowa pressed forward. His helmet was knocked off at the first onset. He was therefore fighting bareheaded, terrifying the Germans with his shaggy, blood-covered face. He did not seem to them to be a human being but some forest monster. However, hundreds, increasing to thousands of knights covered the earth on both sides; till finally under the striking of the enraged Poles, the German avalanche began to shake, and then something happened that might alter the fortune of the whole battle in one moment.

Returning from the pursuit of the Lithuanians, flushed and intoxicated with victory, the Germans encountered the flank of the Polish wing.

Judging that they had already defeated all the king's forces, and that the battle was decisively in their favor, shouting and singing, they were returning, in disorganized masses, when they suddenly observed in front of them a fierce slaughter, and the Poles, already in course of conquering, surrounding the German hosts.

Therefore the Knights of the Cross lowered their heads and looked with surprise through the grates of their helmets at what was being done; then they spurred their horses' flanks and dashed from their places into the vortex of battle.

Thus one mass dashed after another till, in a short while, thousands of them fell upon the Polish legions, who were fatigued from battle.



The Germans shouted with joy when they beheld the nearing help, and they began to strike at the Poles with renewed ardor. Then the battle raged desperately along the whole line. Rivers of blood flowed upon the field. The sky began to be overcast with clouds, and the rumblings of thunder were heard, as though God Himself were to come between the combatants.

But victory began to incline toward the Germans. . . . The Polish army was just at the point of confusion, and the German hosts, who were already excited and frenzied, began to sing, in one voice, the triumphal hymn

“Christ has risen! . . .”  
(Christ ist erstanden! . . .)

But at that moment something more terrible happened.

Just then one of the Knights of the Cross, whilst lying on the ground, disemboweled, with his knife, the horse mounted by Marcin of Wrocimowic, who held the grand standard of Krakow, which had a crowned eagle, and was considered sacred by all the regiments of the Krakow army. The horse and rider suddenly fell, and then the standard also tottered and went down. . . .

In one moment hundreds of arms, strong as iron, stretched out after it, and a shout of joy burst forth from all German breasts. They considered that to be the end, that panic and terror would now seize the Poles, that the time of calamity, carnage and death was at hand, and that the only thing remaining to be done to the fleeing Poles, was to pursue them and cut them down.

Just then a bloody disappointment waited for them.

At the sight of the falling banner, the Polish army shouted like one man, in desperation. But there was rage, but no fear in that shout. One might say that living fire fell upon their coats-of-mail. The most terrible warriors of both sides threw themselves toward that place like furious lions, so that one might have said that a tempest unchained itself around the standard. Men and horses were thrown together like one prodigious whirlpool, and in the midst of that vortex men's arms whipped, swords clashed, axes groaned, steel broke iron, clattering, groaning, wild shrieks of men who were cut down, all these were blended into one most horrible din, such as if the condemned were suddenly calling from the depths of hell. A cloud of dust arose, and from the midst of it rushed out riderless horses blinded from fright, and with blood-shot eyes and wild disordered manes.

But that only lasted for a short while. Not even one German issued alive out of that whirring contest; and in a moment the reconquered standard waved again over the Polish hosts. The wind moved it, unfolded it, and it flourished magnificently like an immense flower; as a sign of hope, a sign of God's anger against the Germans and victory for the Polish knights.

The whole army saluted the standard with a shout of triumph, and they fell with such a frenzy upon the Germans, as though every legion was doubled in strength and number of soldiers.

The Germans were mercilessly and continuously beaten, without even an interval of a moment necessary to catch the breath. They were pressed

and attacked from all sides, and relentlessly cut to pieces by the blows of swords, hatchets, battle-axes and maces. They began again to stagger and retreat. Here and there voices were heard clamoring for mercy. Here and there some foreign knight with face pale from fear and astonishment emerged from the medley, distractedly fleeing wherever his equally scared steed would bear him. The greater number of the white mantles which the brotherhood of the Order wore upon their coats-of-mail were now stretched on the ground.

Owing to that, great alarm seized the hearts of the leaders of the Knights of the Cross, because they understood that their whole salvation depended only upon Ulryk, their master, who up to that moment stood in readiness at the head of sixteen reserve regiments.

But he, looking from above upon the battle, also understood that the supreme moment had arrived, and he moved his iron legions in such a manner as a storm moves heavy disaster-carrying hail clouds.

\* \* \* \* \*

But earlier still, Zyndram appeared on a fiery steed in front of the Polish line which had not yet taken part in the fight. He was watching over everything and noticing carefully the course of the battle. In the midst of the Polish infantry were several heavily armed Bohemian companies. One of those companies was wavering before the encounter, but was ashamed of its behavior, in time. It remained in its position, and dismissed its leader. Now it burned with the desire for battle, so as to redeem the momentary weakness, with their manly courage. But the chief

strength consisted in the Polish regiments; they were composed of unarmored cavalry of poor squires, of infantry from the towns and of those, more numerous than others, the peasants, armed with spears, heavy flails, and scythes, fastened on shafts with their points downward.

"Make yourself ready! Be ready!" Zyndram tremendously shouted as he was flying lightning-like along the ranks.

"Be ready!" repeated the smaller leaders.

Then the peasants, understanding that their time had arrived, rested the shafts of their pikes, flails and scythes upon the ground, and making the sign of the holy cross, began to spit in the immense labor-marked palms of their hands. That ill-boding spitting was audible along the whole line. Then each grasped his weapon and took breath. At that moment a messenger from the king came running to Zyndram and whispered something in his ear. Then Zyndram turned to the infantry, brandished his sword and shouted:

"Forward!"

"Forward! In line! Strait!" extended the command of the leaders.

"Quick! At the dog-brothers! At them!"

They moved. In order to keep even steps and be in line they began to repeat all together:

"Hail—Mary—full—of grace—the—Lord—is—with—thee!"

Then they rushed onward like a flood. The peasants from Wielkopolski and Malopolski (Great and Little Poland) and the Silesians, who had taken refuge in Poland before the war began. And the Mazovians at the Elk, who fled from the Knights of the Cross. The whole field glistened

and shone from the spears, flails, and scythes. Finally they reached the enemy.

“Strike!” shouted the leaders.

Ugh!

Every one groaned as a strong wood cutter does when he first wields the axe to strike. Then they began to strike with all the might and breath which their breasts allowed. Their shrieks and noises reached heaven.

\* \* \* \* \*

The king, who from an elevated place, watched the whole battle, constantly dispatched attendants everywhere, and owing to his many orders he had grown hoarse; when he finally beheld the whole army in action he wished himself to hasten and take part in the battle.

The courtiers prevented him from going; they were careful of the sacred person of their king. Zolawa even seized the king's horse by the bridle, and although the king struck him with his spear upon the hand he did not let go. Others also barred the way, begging, entreating and expostulating, that even if he took part he could not alter the fortunes of the battle.

Meanwhile the greatest danger suddenly hung over the king and over his whole suite.

It was thus: when the grand master, guided by the example of those who had returned after the defeat of the Lithuanians, and wishing also to get near the Polish flank, he was obliged to march around, consequently his sixteen chosen regiments had to pass the neighborhood of the height where Wladyslaw Jagiello was standing. The danger was noticed, but there was no time to retreat. They only furled the royal standard, and at the

same time the king's scribe, Zbigniew of Olesnica, sped, as fast as his steed could carry him, to the nearest regiment, which was just preparing to receive the enemy, and which was led by the knight Mikolaj Kielbasa.

"The king has been singled out! Come and help!" shouted Zbigniew.

But Kielbasa, having lost his helmet, pulled off the cap from his head, which was entirely saturated with blood and perspiration: he showed it to the scribe, and shouted in exceeding anger:

"Look, you madman, whether we are idling here! Do you not see that that cloud is advancing toward us, and if we were to follow your advice we should just lead them to where the king is. Therefore hence with you, or I shall run my sword through you!"

And not knowing with whom he was speaking, breathless, and carried away by anger, he really aimed at the courier, who seeing with whom he had to do, and what is more that the old warrior was right, hastened back to the king and repeated to him what he heard.

Consequently the royal guards, in order to protect their master with their breasts, moved forward in close form like a wall. However, this time the king refused to be restrained and placed himself in the first line. But they were scarcely in their places when the German regiments approached so closely that the coat-of-arms on their shields could be perfectly distinguished. The sight of these warriors was sufficient to cause the stoutest heart to tremble, because it was the very flower and choice of the knighthood; they had on brilliant armor, and sat upon horses as large as auroxen,

not tired out, as they had not yet taken part in battle. They advanced like a hurricane with the clattering of horses' hoofs, with noise, and rustling of the standards and banners. And the grand master himself, arrayed in a broad white mantle, which was spread by the wind, and had the appearance of gigantic wings of an eagle, flew in front of them.

The master had already passed the king's suite, and was galloping to the main place of the battle. For he thought little of the handful of knights standing out of the way. He neither recognized, nor did it ever enter his mind, that the king was among them. But from one of the regiments one gigantic German rushed out. Whether he recognized Jagiello, or was attracted by the silver armor of the king, or simply wished to ascribe to himself knightly daring, he bent his head, stretched his spear and rushed straight at the king.

But the king spurred his steed, and before his men could detain him he, too, rushed toward the knight. They would have undoubtedly engaged one another in mortal combat, but for that very young secretary of the king, Zbigniew of Olesnica, who was as equally skilled in Latin as he was an adept in knightly profession. That young man, holding a part of a broken spear in his hand, approached to the side of the German and inflicted a terrible blow with it upon his head, which crushed the helmet and brought him to the ground. That moment the king himself thrust his sword in the German's uncovered brow and killed him.

In this manner perished the famous German knight, Dypold Kikieritz von Dieber. His horse

was seized by Prince Jamont, and he himself lay, mortally wounded, in his white mantle which covered his steel coat of mail, with gilded belt. His eyes became lustreless, but his feet were still digging the ground until, the greatest pacificator of human beings, death, covered his head with night and pacified him forever.

Knights of the Khelm regiment were rushing forward, to avenge the death of their comrade; but the grand master prevented their progress and kept on shouting: "Herum! Herum!" (Turn around! Turn around!) He pushed them on to that place where the fate of that bloody day was to be determined, that is, to the principal battle.

Now, again, a wonderful thing occurred. Mikolaj, of Kielbasa, who was the most advanced in the field quite recognized the enemy, but owing to the dust the other Polish regiments failed to recognize them, and thinking that they were the Lithuanians returning to the battle, they were not in a hurry to meet them.

Dobko, of Olesnica, was the first to rush against the grand master who was fast advancing in front of his legions. He recognized him by his mantle, his shield and the grand reliquary which he wore on his breast over his armor. But the Polish knight dared not strike the reliquary with his spear, although he greatly surpassed the grand master in strength. Therefore he (Uryk), hit upwards the point of Dobko's spear wounding his horse a little, then passing each other, described a circle and returned to their own places.

"It is the master himself, the Germans!" shouted Dobko.

When the Polish legions heard this, they started



from their places at full gallop to meet the enemy. The first to strike them was Mikolaj Kielbasa with his regiment, and again the battle raged furiously.

But whether it was that the knights of the district of Chelmno, among whom were many people of Polish blood, did not strike earnestly; or because nothing could restrain the fury of the Poles; suffice it to say, that that new onslaught did not bring about the result which the grand master had expected, because he thought that this would be the last stroke inflicted on the king's forces; at the same time he soon saw that it was the Poles who were pressing, progressing, striking, cutting, grasping as if with iron grips. The German legions were defending themselves rather than attacking.

In vain did he encourage them with his voice; in vain did he urge them on with his sword to battle. It is true, they defended themselves and that, valiantly too, but there was not in them that dash nor that ardor which victorious troops are wont to possess, and with which the Polish hearts were filled. In battered armor, covered with blood, wounded and with indented weapons, speechless, the Polish knights pushed on frantically toward the thickest crowd of the Germans who now began pulling the reins of their horses, now looking around them as if to ascertain whether those bands of iron which encompassed them were not pressing them closer and closer, and they retreated slowly but continuously, as if wishing to escape unobserved from the murderous tight position.

Meanwhile, new shouts were heard from the direction of the forest. It was Zyndram who led and let loose the peasants to battle. The noise

caused by the scythes and flails upon iron armor were soon heard; corpses began to fall more and more thickly. Blood flowed in a stream on the trampled ground, and the battle became as one immense flame, because the Germans, knowing that there was help only in the sword, they began desperately to defend themselves.

\* \* \* \* \*

And they prevailed upon each other, uncertain of victory until gigantic clouds of dust appeared unexpectedly to the right side of the battle.

"The Lithuanians are returning!" roared Polish voices exultingly.

And they guessed it. The Lithuanians whom it was easier to rout than to conquer, were now returning, and mounted upon their swift horses, shouted wildly and moved onward like a tempest, to the battle.

Then several *comthurs*, headed by Werner von Tetlingen, hastened to the grand master.

"Save yourself, sir," cried the count of Elblang, with pale lips. "Save yourself and the Order before we are surrounded."

But the knightly Ulryk looked upon him sullenly, and lifting up his hands toward heaven, exclaimed:

"God forbid that I should leave this field upon which so many brave men have fallen! God forbid!"

And shouting to the people to follow him he threw himself into the vortex of the battle. Meanwhile the Lithuanians came running along, and such a confusion, such a whirling and such a boiling ensued that it was impossible for human eye to distinguish anything.

The grand master was hit in the mouth by a

Lithuanian lance, and was twice wounded in his face. He defended himself for a while with his benumbed right hand against the blows. Finally he was struck with a javelin in the neck; and fell down like a log. A crowd of warriors dressed in skins, like ants, completely covered him.

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Werner von Tetlingen fled with several regiments. But the iron ring of the Polish troops closed in all the remaining regiments. The battle turned into butchery and the defeat of the Knights of the Cross was so much an unheard of disaster, that few like it are to be found in the annals of human affairs. Never, even in Christian times, from the wars of the Romans, and the Goths with Atila, and Charles Martel with the Arabs, did armies fight so mightily. But now the most part of one of them lay stretched upon the ground like sheaves of grain. Those regiments which were lately led by the master to battle surrendered. The Chelmno warriors planted their banners in the ground. Other knights jumped from their horses to show that they wished to go into captivity, and knelt down upon the blood-saturated ground. The whole regiment of St. Jerzey, in which the foreign guests served, and their leader did the same.

\*      \*      \*      \*      \*      \*

But the battle continued, because many regiments of the Knights of the Cross preferred death rather than beg for quarter and captivity. Now the Germans fought according to their own military custom, forming an immense circle and defending themselves in the same manner as a herd of boars defends itself when it is surrounded by a pack

of wolves. The Polish Lithuanian ring enclosed that circle like a serpent surrounds the body of a bull constantly becoming narrower. Again arms whipped, flails thundered, scythes gnashed, swords cut, lances pierced, axes and pruning-hooks hewed. The Germans were cut down like a forest. They died in silence, gloomy, grand and intrepid.

Some of them lifted up their visors, bade farewell to one another, and gave the last kiss before death. Some rushed blindly into the heat of the battle, as if seized by madness. Others fought as in sleep. Others, finally, committed suicide, striking the misericordia into their throats. Others flung their necklace, and turning toward their comrades begged them: "Stab!"

The fury of the Poles broke, in a short while, the great circle in about a dozen smaller groups; then, it was not difficult for single knights to escape. But as a whole those groups fought with desperation and fury.

There were few of them to kneel down begging for mercy, and when finally the terrible impetuous attack of the Poles scattered also the smaller groups, even single knights would not give themselves up alive into the hands of the conquerors. That was a day of the greatest calamity for the Order and for the western knighthood, but at the same time most glorious.

Surrounded by peasant infantry, the mighty giant, Arnold von Baden, formed a heap of Polish corpses; he stood upon it and had the appearance of a boundary pillar planted upon a hill, and whosoever approached him within the sword's length died as if struck by lightning.

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At last Zawisza Czarny Sulimczyk approached. But seeing a knight without a horse, and not wishing to attack him from the rear, contrary to knightly usage, he also jumped from his steed, and called to him from a distance:

“Turn your head, German, and surrender, or meet me in combat.”

But Arnold turned and recognized Zawisza by his black armor and by the coat-of-arms on his shield, and said within himself:

“Death is coming, and my hour has struck. For nobody escapes him alive, yet if I could conquer him I should obtain immortal glory, and probably save my life, too.”

Then he rushed toward him, and they fell upon each other, on the ground covered with corpses, like two tempests. But Zawisza's enormous power towered above all others, so much so, that unfortunate were the parents of those children who happened to meet him in battle. Accordingly, Arnold's shield, which was forged in Marienburg, burst under the blow of Zawisza's sword, also his steel helmet was broken like a potsherd, and the mighty Arnold fell with his head split in two.

\* \* \* \* \*

Heryk, the *comthur* of Czluchow, who was the most implacable enemy of the Polish race, who vowed to have two swords carried in front of him until he had them immersed in Polish blood, now sneaked away from the field like a fox steals away when surrounded by hunters. When Zbyszko of Bogdaniec intercepted him, the *comthur*, when he saw the sword above his head, cried:

“Erbarme dich meiner!” (spare me) and he folded his hands in terror. When the young

knight heard it, he was quite unable to withhold his hand and stem the swing, but he succeeded in turning his sword, and with the flat side of it he only struck his fat and sweating mouth.<sup>1</sup> Then Zbyszko pushed him to his armor-bearer, who fastened a rope on his neck and led him like a bull to that place where all captive Knights of the Cross were driven together.

\* \* \* \* \*

Old Macko searched continually upon the bloody field for Kuno Lichtenstein. Fortunate in everything that day, for the Poles finally delivered him into Macko's hands, he found him among a handful of Knights of the Cross, who hid themselves in the thickets when they fled from the terrible calamity. The sunshine, which reflected from their arms, betrayed their presence to the pursuers. All fell on their knees and surrendered at once. But Macko, who had learned that the grand *comthur* of the Order was among the prisoners, ordered Kuno to stand before him. Then Macko, removing the helmet from his head, inquired :

“ Do you recognize me, Kuno ? ”

Then frowning his brow and staring in Macko's face, said after a while :

“ I have seen you at the court, in Plock.”

“ No,” replied Macko, “ you had seen me before that! You did see me at Krakow, when I entreated you for the life of my nephew, who was condemned to die because of a thoughtless attack upon you. At that time I vowed to God, and had sworn upon my knightly honor, that if I find you I should meet you in deadly combat.”

“ I know,” replied Lichtenstein, blowing with his

<sup>1</sup> Literally “ Snout.”

mouth proudly, although immediately he paled greatly. "But I am now your prisoner, and you will dishonor yourself if you lift your sword against me."

Then Macko's jaws were drawn and assumed an ill-boding and an exactly wolfish appearance.

"Kuno Lichtenstein," said Macko, "I shall not raise my sword against an unarmed man, but I tell you this, that if you deny me combat, then I shall order them to hang you with a rope like a dog."

"I have no other choice. Stand up!" exclaimed the grand *comthur*.

"To death; not to captivity," Macko affirmed once more.

"To death."

And, after a while they wrestled in the presence of the Polish and German knights. Kuno was the younger and more dexterous than Macko, but the latter far surpassed his antagonist in the strength of his hands and legs, so that in the twinkling of an eye he threw him down to the ground, and pressed his knee on Kuno's breast.

The eyes of the *comthur* turned upward with terror.

"Forgive me!" he groaned, throwing out saliva and foam from his mouth.

"No!" replied the implacable Macko.

Then putting the misericordia upon the adversary's throat he thrust twice. Kuno gurgled and hawked terrible. A flood of blood gushed from his mouth. Death twitchings quivered his body, then he stretched, and the great pacifier of knights also put him to rest forever.

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The battle changed into a chase and butchery. Those who refused to surrender perished. There were many encounters and battles throughout the world in the past, but nobody living remembered such a terrible calamity. Not only the Order of the Knights of the Cross had fallen at the feet of the great king, but also all Germany, which had assisted the Knights of the Cross, with the Teutonic "Vanguard" which was composed of the most famous of her knights, was continually and deeply eating into the Slav body.

Out of seven hundred "white mantles" who, as leaders, marched in front of that German flood only fifteen were left. More than forty thousand lay low in eternal sleep, upon that bloody battlefield.

The numerous banners which as late as noon were floating above the immense army of the Knights of the Cross, all had fallen into the blood-stained, victorious hands of the Poles. Not a single one was rescued or saved. Now the Polish and Lithuanian knights threw them at Jagiello's feet, who, raising his pious eyes toward heaven repeated with emotion:

"It was the will of God!"

The foremost captives were presented to his majesty: Abdank Skarbek of Gor, led in Prince Kazimierz of Szczecin; the Bohemian knight of Trocnow, was brought in by Konrad, prince of Olesnica; and Przedpelko of Kopidlow, (with coat-of-arms Dryia), brought Jerzey Gersdorf, who was fainting from wounds he had received in battle, and had led all the guests of the Order which composed the regiments of St. Jerzey.



## CHAPTER VIII.

MACKO and Zbyszko returned to Bogdaniec. The old knight lived a long life, and Zbyszko who waited in health and strength lived to see those fortunate moments in which, through one gate of Malborg, the master of the Knights of the Cross left with tears in his eyes; and through another gate entered, at the head of his army the Polish Woyewoda to take possession in the name of the king, the city and the whole country as far as the grey waves of the Baltic Sea.

THE END.